

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION AFTER ŚAŚĀṆKA

I. Kingdom of Gauḍa

THE death of Śaśāṅka proved to be a political disaster of the first magnitude. Not only were the dreams of a far-flung Gauḍa empire rudely shattered, but within a few years his kingdom, including the capital city Karṇasuvarṇa, passed into the hands of Bhāskaravarman, the hostile king of Kāmarūpa. The events that led to this complete collapse are not known, and only a few facts of this obscure period in the history of Bengal may be gleaned from the documents at present available to us.)

(Hiuen Tsang who travelled in Bengal about 638 A.D., shortly after the death of Śaśāṅka, mentions, besides Kajaṅgala (territory round Rajmahal), four kingdoms in Bengal proper, viz., Puṇḍra-vardhana, Karṇasuvarṇa, Samatāṭa, and Tāmralipti.¹ The first two undoubtedly denote the two component parts of Śaśāṅka's kingdom viz., North Bengal and northern parts of Western Bengal including Burdwan, Birbhum, Murshidabad, and Nadia districts. Hiuen Tsang refers to the capital of each of the kingdoms mentioned by him, but does not say anything of their kings and gives no indication of their political status. The silence has led some scholars to think that they were included within the empires of Harshavardhana.² But this assumption is not supported either by the general tenor of Hiuen Tsang's description or by any facts known so far.

(It is obvious from Hiuen Tsang's account that Śaśāṅka's death loosened the bonds which united North and West Bengal, and these formed separate kingdoms in 638 A.D. Within a few years both these kingdoms were conquered by Bhāskaravarman. The fact that Bhāskaravarman made a grant from the victorious camp at Karṇasuvarṇa (A. 27) shows that he even succeeded in seizing the capital city of Śaśāṅka.)

This may also be indirectly concluded from some incidents referred to in the *Life* of Hiuen Tsang. It is recorded there that some time about 642 A.D., Bhāskaravarman proceeded with his army of elephants, 20,000 in number, to meet Harsha at Kajaṅgala near Rajmahal, and his 30,000 ships passed along the Ganges to the

same destination.³ This evidently implies an effective suzerainty of the king of Kāmarūpa over the former dominions of Śaśāṅka.⁴

It is interesting to note that, according to the *Life* of Hiuen Tsang, at the time of this meeting Harsha himself had just returned from his victorious campaign in Koṅgoda,⁵ the kingdom of the Śailodbhavas who formerly acknowledged the suzerainty of Śaśāṅka.

Now Hiuen Tsang's account, as preserved in his *Records*, does not refer to Puṇḍravardhana and Karmasuvārṇa as subject to Bhāskaravarman, and as regards Koṅgoda, it even goes so far as to say that its soldiers "rule by force the neighbouring provinces, so that no one can resist them."⁶ (It would thus appear that the dominions of Śaśāṅka in and outside Bengal proper were conquered respectively by Bhāskaravarman and Harsha some time between 638 and 642 A.D.) The only exception was (Magadha) which evidently passed into the hands of one Pūrṇavarman, described as last of the race of Aśokarāja, at the time when Hiuen Tsang visited it about 637-38 A.D.⁷ But in or about 641 A.D. it was conquered by Harshavardhana.⁸ (Kajaṅgala also was presumably conquered by Harsha.

Thus the available evidences seem to indicate that the death of Śaśāṅka was followed by a disruption of his vast dominions and its component parts formed separate independent States.) This gave the required opportunity⁹ to his life-long enemies, Bhāskaravarman and Harshavardhana, who conquered, respectively, his former dominions in and outside Bengal.

✓ (The political disintegration of the Gauḍa empire after the death of Śaśāṅka seems to be referred to in that curious Buddhist work *Ārya-maṇjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, mentioned above. The relevant passage has been (translated as follows) by Jayaswal:

"After the death of Soma the (Gauḍa political system (*Gauḍa-tantra*) was reduced to mutual distrust, raised weapons and mutual jealousy—one (king) for a week ; another for a month ; then a republican constitution—such will be the daily (condition) of the country on the bank of the Ganges where houses were built on the ruins of monasteries.) Thereafter Soma's (Śaśāṅka's) son Mānava will last for 8 months 5 ($\frac{1}{2}$?) days."¹⁰

This English rendering of the relevant passage by Mr. Jayaswal cannot be regarded as free from doubts, particularly as the reference to a republican constitution is based on an emendation of the text. But it undoubtedly conveys the general sense of the text.

The passage immediately following the above extract in *MMK.* almost undoubtedly refers to a king Jayanāga of Gauḍa,¹¹ and there is equally little doubt that he is to be identified with the king of that name whose coins have been found in Western Bengal,¹² and who issued a land-grant (A. 32) from the victorious camp of Karṇasuvarṇa, the capital of Śaśāṅka.¹³

Although the tradition recorded in *MMK.* cannot be regarded, by itself, as historical, it is corroborated in the present instance by known facts. The general picture of anarchy, confusion, and political disintegration is fully confirmed by the conquests of Harsha and Bhāskaravarman, and merely supplies the details of a presumption to which they inevitably lead. (The reference to Jayanāga is also corroborated, as noted above, by coins and inscription of a king named Jayanāga who ruled with Karṇasuvarṇa as capital.)

(The date of Jayanāga cannot be ascertained with precision, but judging from his coins and inscription, he may be placed within the period 550-650 A.D.) On the basis of the tradition recorded in *MMK.* (we may hold that after the anarchy and confusion caused by the invasion of Bhāskaravarman had subsided, and a son of Śaśāṅka had vainly tried to re-establish the fortunes of his family, the kingdom passed into the hands of Jayanāga.¹⁴ He is styled *Mahārājādhirāja* and was evidently a ruler of some authority. He ruled over Birbhum and Murshidabad districts, but the extent of his kingdom or any other detail of his reign is not known to us.)

(For more than a century after this the history of Gauḍa is obscure in the extreme. This period which extends roughly from 650 to 750 A.D. was marked at the beginning by political chaos and confusion in Eastern India caused by the death of Harsha (646 or 647 A.D.), the usurpation of his kingdom by his minister, and the strange military adventures of the Chinese envoy Wang-hiuen-tse) to which reference will be made later.

But (the success of the Chinese arms brought into prominence a new factor in North Indian politics. The powerful king of Tibet, Srong-tsan Gampo, who exercised suzerainty over Nepal and had sent military assistance to the Chinese in their hour of need, is credited with extensive conquests in India. There is no reliable record of his exploits, but he is said to have conquered Assam) and gradually made himself master of nearly the half of India.¹⁵ In spite of obvious exaggerations the claims were probably not without

some basis. We have definite evidence that (the dynasty of Bhāskaravarman was overthrown) not long after his death by a Mlechchha ruler.¹⁶ It is also not improbable that the Khaḷga kings who ruled over parts of Bengal in the seventh century A.D. came in the train of the Tibetan invasion,¹⁷ though of this we have no definite evidence. Although the Tibetan supremacy was shortlived and Indian States threw off the suzerainty of Tibet about 702 A.D.,¹⁸ the menace of Tibetan invasion probably played an important part in Indian politics.

Another important political factor was the re-establishment of the Later Gupta power in Magadha. That this province was included for a short time in the empire of Harsha admits of no doubt.¹⁹ But not long after his death it came into the possession of Adityasena. He and his three successors ruled over this kingdom in the latter half of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century A.D.²⁰ They all assumed imperial titles and were evidently very powerful rulers. Some scholars hold that Bengal, or at least a large part of it, was included in their empire,²¹ (but we have no reliable evidence of any kind to support this view.)

(We learn from an inscription²² of a king of the Śaila dynasty) named Jayavardhana that the brother of his great-grandfather (defeated the Pauṇḍra king and conquered his dominions.) According to this record the Śaila dynasty had a remarkable history. Their original home was in the valley of the Himālayas, but they conquered the Gurjara country. Later, they spread to the east and ultimately three branches of the family established themselves at Kāśī, the Vindhya region, and Pauṇḍra. It is said that the two chiefs who conquered Kāśī and Pauṇḍra were brothers, and the son of the former became the lord of the Vindhya regions.

(The Pauṇḍra kingdom, conquered by the Śailas, has been identified by all scholars with North Bengal, on the ground that this region was known as both Puṇḍra and Pauṇḍra.²³ Unfortunately, no details of the Śaila rule in Bengal are known to us. The conquest probably took place about 725 A.D.²⁴)

(The next important event in the history of Bengal is the defeat and death of the king of Gauḷa at the hands of Yaśovarman, the king of Kanauj, who undertook a military expedition all over Northern India to establish his position as Lord Paramount like Harshavardhana and Yaśodharman. The date of Yaśovarman's conquests may be approximately fixed between 725 and 735 A.D.)

He evidently regarded the Lord of Gauḍa as one of his chief adversaries and his success against the latter has obtained great prominence on account of the title of a famous poetical work *Gauḍa-vaho* ('Slaying of the King of Gauḍa') by his court-poet Vākpatirāja.²⁵ Curiously enough, the poem itself, consisting of 1209 verses, refers only once (v. 1194), very incidentally, to the slaying of the Gauḍa king, while five verses (vv. 354, 414-417) refer to the Lord of Magadha. The latter fled before Yaśovarman in the Vindhya region (v. 354), but the other kings who accompanied him immediately returned to fight (v. 414). After describing the battle in two verses (vv. 415, 416), the poet simply says that Yaśovarman, having slain the king of the Magadhas, who was fleeing, proceeded to the sea-shore (v. 417).

It has been assumed that the Lord of Gauḍa and Lord of Magadha, mentioned by Vākpati, were one and the same person. The assumption has led to a further one, viz., that Gauḍa was subject to the Later Gupta kings of Magadha. But even if the first assumption be correct, the second does not necessarily follow. The emphasis laid on Gauḍa in the very title of the poem would rather lead to the inference that Magadha was subject to the king of Gauḍa.²⁶ But all these assumptions must be regarded as purely provisional on account of the obscurity of the poem *Gauḍa-vaho* which has been discussed in detail in Appendix II.

(Yaśovarman followed up his victory against Gauḍa by the conquest of Vaṅga. Thus nearly the whole of modern Bengal passed into his hands. The nature of his rule is not known to us, but it could not have been of long duration. For the promising career of Yaśovarman was cut short by the disastrous defeat inflicted upon him by Lalitāditya, king of Kashmir, before the close of the first half of the eighth century A.D., and probably not long after 736 A.D.)²⁷

(Lalitāditya naturally regarded himself as the overlord of the various States which had acknowledged the suzerainty of Yaśovarman. Presumably to enforce this claim, he undertook a *digvijaya* or an expedition of conquest.) According to Kalhaṇa's account his victorious campaign not only led him across the whole of Northern India right up to Kāliṅga, but also over the whole of Southern India up to the river Kāverī and the Malaya mountains. To what extent this may be regarded as historically true it is difficult to say. (As regards Bengal,) with which alone we are here concerned, (there is no direct reference in Kalhaṇa's account that Lalitāditya invaded,

far less conquered, any part of the province.) But two incidents reported by Kalhaṇa lead to the presumption that the kingdom of Gauḍa acknowledged his suzerainty.

In the first place, we are told that a troop of elephants from Gauḍa-maṇḍala joined Lalitāditya,²⁸ and it is only reasonable to conclude that the king of Gauḍa acknowledged the suzerainty of Lalitāditya and sent his elephant troops to help him. Secondly, Kalhaṇa relates how the king of Gauḍa was forced to visit Kashmir at the behest of Lalitāditya, and was murdered there.²⁹ The Gauḍa king had evidently some fear about his safety, and to remove it, Lalitāditya swore by an image of Viṣṇu that no violence would be done to his person. In spite of this guarantee Lalitāditya caused the Gauḍa king to be murdered at a place called Trigrāmi. Here, again, the distant journey undertaken by the Gauḍa king, in spite of misgivings about his own safety, can be reasonably explained only on the supposition that he acknowledged the suzerainty of Lalitāditya.

The sequel to the murder of the king of Gauḍa is interesting enough to be recorded here. Kalhaṇa relates how some loyal and faithful followers of the Gauḍa king took a solemn vow to avenge the foul murder, made the long journey from Gauḍa to Kashmir in the guise of pilgrims, and attacked the temple which contained the Viṣṇu image by which Lalitāditya swore the safety of the Gauḍa king. With a full knowledge of certain death, these people entered the temple and broke one of the two images found there, unhappily the wrong one. In the meantime, soldiers came from the capital and cut all the Gauḍas to pieces. The Kashmirian poet has paid the highest tribute to the loyalty and devotion of these people. "Even the creator," says he, "cannot achieve what the Gauḍas did on that occasion," and "to this day the world is filled with the fame of the Gauḍa heroes."³⁰ The story, romantic though it is, is probably true, for otherwise Kalhaṇa would not have reported it, knowing fully how thoroughly it discredits his ideal king Lalitāditya.

Same reliance, however, cannot be placed on another romantic story recorded by Kalhaṇa about Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Lalitāditya. But though its historical character may well be doubted, a brief account of the curious episode may be given for what it is worth.

Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Lalitāditya, set out with a vast army for conquering the world, in imitation of his grandfather. But his kingdom was usurped, during his absence, by his brother-in-law Jajja,

and he was deserted by his army. Ultimately he dismissed all his soldiers and wandered alone. In the course of this romantic enterprise, he entered the city of Paunḍravardhana which was then ruled by a prince called Jayanta, as a subordinate chief to the king of Gauḍa. He married Jayanta's daughter, defeated the five Gauḍa chiefs and made his father-in-law their overlord.³¹

It is difficult to say what amount of truth, if any, there is in this story. But the reference to five Gauḍa kings indicates a state of political disintegration which is supported by other evidences. It appears very likely that Gauḍa became the field of struggle for supremacy among a number of local chiefs who had asserted their independence as there was no central authority to keep them under control.

(Another reference to a foreign conquest of Gauḍa, about this period, occurs in an inscription of Jayadeva II, the Lichchhavi king of Nepal. In this record, dated 759 or 748 A.D., the king's father-in-law, Harsha of the Bhagadatta dynasty, is described as the lord of Gauḍa, Uḍra, Kaliṅga and Kośala.³² The fact that the rulers of Kāmarūpa claimed descent from Bhagadatta has led to the presumption that Harsha was ruler of Kāmarūpa.³³ We must remember, however, that the Kara dynasty of Orissa also claimed descent from the same family,³⁴ and it is equally probable that Harsha belonged to that dynasty. In any case we have no independent evidence about the possession of Gauḍa by any ruler of either Kāmarūpa or Orissa, and it is difficult to say how far the assumption of the title 'lord of Gauḍa' was justified by actual exercise of authority in that kingdom.

II. Kingdom of Vaṅga

We have no definite information about the political condition of Vaṅga during the reign of Śaśāṅka. But even if it were incorporated in his dominions, it must have again formed an independent State shortly after his death. (Hiuen Tsang has referred to the kingdom of Samataṭa, which seems to have included the major part, if not the whole, of Vaṅga proper.³⁵) How long the independent kingdom established in this region by Gopachandra continued to exist and how it ended are unknown to us. (We learn from Hiuen Tsang that a line of Brāhmaṇa kings ruled in Samataṭa in the first half of the seventh century A.D. But he does not give us any information about

it beyond stating that Śīlabhadra, the patriarch of Nālandā, was a scion of this royal family.³⁶ Reference may be made in this connection to a vassal chief named Jyeshṭhabhadra, mentioned in the Nidhanpur copper-plate of Bhāskaravarman. The name-ending *-bhadra* has led some scholars to connect him with Śīlabhadra and to postulate the existence of a Bhadra dynasty ruling in Bengal.³⁷ Although there is not sufficient evidence in support of this view, it is not an unlikely one. This Brāhmanical royal dynasty seems to have been overthrown by a line of Buddhist kings whose names contained the word *khaḍga* as an essential element. The history of this dynasty, generally referred to as the Khaḍga dynasty, is known from two copper-plates (A. 33-4) found at Ashrafpur, 30 miles north-east of Dacca, and a short record (A. 35) inscribed on an image of Sarvāṇī (Durgā) found at Deulbāḍī, 14 miles south of Comilla. These disclose the names of three rulers viz., Khaḍgodyama, his son Jātakhaḍga, and the latter's son Devakhaḍga. They also refer to the queen and the son of the last-named king, viz. Prabhāvatī and Rājarāja, also called Rājarāja-bhaṭa. They were all devout Buddhists.

Khaḍgodyama is described as *nṛipādhirāja* (overlord of kings) and seems to have been the founder of the kingdom. The records unfortunately do not contain any historical information, beyond the usual vague praises, about him or his successors. Of the two copper-plate grants of Devakhaḍga, one is dated in his 13th regnal year, and the date of the other is doubtful. Both were issued from the royal camp of Karmānta-*vāsaka*, which was probably their capital. This city has been identified with modern Baḍkāmtā, a Police station in the Tippera district,³⁸ but this identification cannot be regarded as certain.

The date of these kings is also a matter of dispute. Some scholars refer them to the 9th century A.D.,³⁹ while others hold that they ruled during the latter part of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century.⁴⁰ Apart from the evidence of palaeography, on which both the theories are mainly based, the latter view seems to be supported by certain reference in I-tsing's account of fifty-six Buddhist priests of China who visited India and the neighbouring parts during the latter half of the seventh century A.D. One of these priests, Sheng-Chi by name, found Rājabhaṭa ruling over Samataṭa,⁴¹ and this ruler has been identified by most scholars with Rājarājabhaṭa of the Khaḍga dynasty.⁴² From the same work of I-tsing, we know that a certain Buddhist temple situated about 228 miles east of Nālandā⁴³ was

originally founded by Śrī-Gupta, but the land belonging to it "has now reverted to the king of Eastern India, whose name is Devavarmā."⁴⁴ This king has been identified by some with Devagupta⁴⁵ of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha, and by others with Devakhaḍga.⁴⁶ It must be remembered, however, that the temple in question was undoubtedly situated in Bengal. Further, Magadha, the home-territory of the Later Guptas, is placed by I-tsing in Mid-India⁴⁷ and not Eastern India, which is described by him as bounded by Tāmralipti in the south (and west) and Harikela in the east.⁴⁸ The identification of Devavarmā with Devakhaḍga, therefore, appears to be more reasonable. The Chinese evidence, thus interpreted, leads to the conclusion that the Khaḍga dynasty ruled approximately between 650 and 700 A.D. and their kingdom comprised nearly the whole of Eastern and Southern Bengal. But these conclusions must be regarded as tentative.

The tribal or dynastic name Khaḍga is not otherwise known. But there was a Khaḍka or Kharka clan, living in the Gurkhā District in Nepal, who claimed to be Kshatriyas. In 1559 one of its chiefs, Dravya Shāh, the son of the Raja of Lamjung, seized Gurkhā and founded the Gurkhā Dynasty of Nepal.⁴⁹ We can trace the existence of a well-known caste called the Khaḍgis as early as the 14th century A.D.⁵⁰ Three important persons in the Mallasarul CP (A. 19) bear the epithet Khaḍgi which reminds us of the present Nepalese name like Khaḍga Sham Sher. It has been suggested that the Khaḍgis probably immigrated into Bengal from Nepal and later acquired military power as a consequence of the invasion of Eastern India by the Nepalese and Tibetans shortly before, and after the death of, Harsha. Of course this must be regarded purely as a hypothesis until more positive evidence is forthcoming.⁵¹

The Tippera copper-plate grant (A. 36) of Sāmanta Lokanātha⁵² introduces us to a line of feudatory chiefs ruling in East Bengal in the region round Tippera. The founder of the family is described as a paramount ruler, *adhimahārāja*. His name is lost, except the last two letters *-nātha*. His successor Śivanātha is, however, referred to as *sāmanta*. Nothing of importance is known of the next two rulers after whom came Lokanātha who issued the charter.

The obscurity and ambiguity of the language used in describing the achievements of Lokanātha have led the scholars to interpret them very differently. The following is a summary of the important conclusions reached by D. C. Sircar :

Lokanātha, Jivadhāraṇa and Jayatuṅgavarsha were feudatories of a common suzerain (*Parameśvara*) who “lost heavily in men in the struggle with Jayatuṅgavarsha.” Lokanātha, however, achieved conspicuous success against that enemy, and for this reason the king named Jivadhāraṇa gave up fighting (against Lokanātha who appears to have been sent against Jivadhāraṇa by the *Parameśvara*) and.... offered *vishaya* or territory to Lokanātha who was in possession of the *Śrīpaṭṭa* or royal charter (i. e., granted the position of Governor of Samataṭa by the *Parameśvara* i.e., the common suzerain)’. According to this interpretation Jayatuṅgavarsha and Jivadhāraṇa were two refractory feudatories of the *Parameśvara*, the common overlord, but Lokanātha was a faithful feudatory who fought on his behalf against the other two feudatories.⁵³

According to Dr. Basak who edited the Tippera CP of Lokanātha, he himself defeated many times the large armies of *Parameśvara* or the common suzerain sent against him.⁵⁴ We do not know anything about Jayatuṅgavarsha, but possess some information about Jivadhāraṇa to which reference will be made later.

The copper-plate of Lokanātha is dated in words, but unfortunately the portion containing the figure for hundreds is lost and the extant part gives us only the year 44. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar restores it as 144, and refers it to Harsha Era which would make it equivalent to 750 A.D.⁵⁵ Dr. R. G. Basak, on the other hand, restores the date as 344, and referring it to the Gupta Era obtains the date 663-64 A.D.⁵⁶ for Lokanātha. The paleographical evidence, according to Dr. Basak, also refers the inscription to the seventh century A.D. If we accept this date, we may reasonably hold the view that Lokanātha was a feudatory of the Khaḍga dynasty, and Jayatuṅgavarsha was *biruda* (title) of either Kṣaḍgodyama or Jātakhaḍga. It may be added that according to the copper-plates of the Khaḍgas, Jātakhaḍga annihilated his enemies and Devakhaḍga had under him a number of feudal rulers who paid court to him. But whether the Khaḍgas exercised supremacy over Lokanātha or not, there is no valid reason to suppose, as some scholars have done, that both these dynasties acknowledged a common suzerain, far less that this suzerain was the king of Kāmarūpa.⁵⁷

Some details about Jivadhāraṇa referred to above are known from a CP found at Kailan (A. 37), a village south-west of Comilla and 13 miles west of the Lalmai Railway station. The Charter was issued by Śrīdhāraṇa “in the eighth year of the sovereignty over

Samataṭa and many other countries which has been received from the grace of the feet of the father", whose name was Jivadhāraṇa and who is also called Lord of Samataṭa. Śrīdhāraṇa is called *Sāntaśvara* and bears the feudatory title '*prāptapañcha-mahāśabda*. Reference is made to Devaparvata, a Provincial headquarter, which is encircled by the river Kshīrodā as if by a moat. "This river is probably represented by the modern Khira or Khirnai, a dried up river-course still traceable as branching off from the Gomati just west of the town of Comilla. It flows by the eastern side of the Maināmati hills and skirts the southern end of the hills near the Chandimura peak, where another branch of the river meets it flowing by the western side of the hill. The river thus surrounds the southern end of the Maināmati hills, where the ancient hill-fort of Devaparvata seems to have been situated, and then runs south-west to fall into the Dakatia river." The name of this city and the river is mentioned in the Paschimbhāg CP of Śrīchandra of a later date (B. 75). The two Rāta kings seem to have nominally acknowledged the suzerainty of some overlord, but were, to all intents and purposes, independent.

The history of the Khaḍga dynasty after Rājarājabhaṭa is not known to us. According to the traditions recorded by the Tibetan monk Tāranātha, to which detailed reference will be made in the next chapter,⁵⁸ the Chandra dynasty had been ruling in Vaṅga (and occasionally also over Gauḍa) as early as the middle of the seventh century A.D., and its last two rulers Govichandra and Lalitachandra reigned during the last part of the seventh and the first part of the eighth century A.D. It is not improbable that Govichandra supplanted the Khaḍgas and re-established the supremacy of his dynasty.

If we may believe in Tāranātha's statement, it was probably during the reign of Lalitachandra that Yaśovarman invaded Vaṅga. It is, however, equally or perhaps more likely that the king of Vaṅga opposing Yaśovarman was a Khaḍga king. But whoever he may be, he was, according to *Gauḍa-vaho*, no mean enemy, and possessed large elephant forces (v. 419). The author of *Gauḍa-vaho* pays indirectly a high tribute to the people of Vaṅga when he says that 'their faces assumed a pale colour while offering obeisance to the victor, because they were not accustomed to such an act (v. 420).' This testimony to the people's bravery and love of freedom was perhaps based on the personal knowledge of the author. The suzerainty of Yaśovarman was probably more nominal than real, and

in any case it was shortlived. There is no evidence to show that either of the two other foreign rulers, Lalitāditya or Harsha, who probably exercised supremacy over Gauḍa, had any pretensions of suzerainty over Vaṅga.

According to Tāranātha, the death of Lalitachandra was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion. There was no king ruling over either Gauḍa or Vaṅga, and, as he characteristically puts it, every Kshatriya, Grandee, Brāhmaṇa, and merchant was a king in his own house.

A contemporary record (B. 2) also describes the political condition of Bengal in the middle of the eighth century A.D. as '*mātsya-nyāya*', a technical term used in treatises on politics to denote the absence of a central ruling authority, resulting in a chaotic state, where every local chief assumes royal authority and might alone is right.

This lamentable state of political disintegration was undoubtedly caused by the series of foreign invasions and the successive changes of ruling dynasties in Gauḍa and Vaṅga referred to above. They shattered the political fabric reared up with so much care by Gopachandra, Dharmāditya, Samāchāradeva and Śaśāṅka. Bengal lapsed into a state of political inanity and the people must have suffered untold miseries. But the very grave peril and the extremity of the evil brought its own remedy.

APPENDIX I

RELATIONS OF TIBET WITH INDIA

Some time between 581 and 600 A. D., an obscure chief named Srong-Tsan united the scattered hill tribes and founded a powerful kingdom in Tibet. He had an army of about 1,00,000 soldiers and led a victorious campaign to Central India, a term used by the Chinese to designate Bihar and probably also sometimes U. P., as distinguished from Eastern India comprising Bengal and Assam. The nature and extent of his conquest are not known to us, but it has been suggested that the era known as *San* and current in Bengal and Assam commemorates this forgotten foreign invasion of Bengal. The name of the era, *San*, equivalent to the last part of the name of the Tibetan king, and its epoch 593-594 A.D., both favour this hypothesis,⁵⁹ but it goes against the generally accepted view that the era originated in the time of Akbar by the conversion of Hijra into a solar year.⁶⁰

Srong-Tsan was succeeded by his son Srong-Tsan Gampo.⁶¹ He was a remarkable figure. According to Bu-ston (II. .183) he brought under his power all the petty chieftains of the borderland, and the work of political unification of Tibet, begun by his father, was practically completed. All the kingdoms of the frontier were united under his rule. He married a princess of Nepal and also won, under military pressure, the hands of the daughter of the Chinese emperor. Through the influence of his queens he was converted into Buddhism and introduced the religion in his country. The grateful posterity regarded him as an incarnation of Bodhisatva Padmapāṇi. He introduced literacy among the people of Tibet by devising Tibetan alphabet on the model of the Indian, invited Indian Paṇḍits to Tibet, and had Buddhist scriptures translated into Tibetan. He founded numerous monasteries and castles at Lhasa and made that his capital. He also extended the suzerainty of Tibet in all directions.

Srong-Tsan Gampo was a contemporary of the great Indian emperor Harshavardhana. The death of Harsha, towards the close of 646 or the beginning of 647 A.D., was followed by anarchy and confusion, and the succession to the imperial throne was claimed by one of his ministers, who evidently held sway in Bihar

and whose name is given in Chinese texts as Nā-fū-ti O-lo-na-shuen, the original Indian name being perhaps Arjuna or Aruṇāsava of Tirabhukti (Tirhut, North Bihar). According to the story preserved in the Chinese annals, this Arjuna attacked a Chinese mission, under Wang-Hiuen-Tse, that was sent by the Chinese Emperor to Harsha. For reasons, not explained, Arjuna killed most of the members of the mission and plundered their property. Wang-Hiuen-Tse fled to Nepal, secured 7,000 soldiers from Nepal and 1,200 from Tibet, and, returning to Indian plains, disastrously defeated and imprisoned Arjuna and took him a captive to China. It is said that Wang-Hiuen-Tse stormed the capital city of Arjuna and about 580 walled towns in India submitted to him. Even Bhāskaravarman, the king of Kāmarūpa, sent supplies to the victorious army led by Wang-Hiuen-Tse.⁶² The whole episode took place during 647 and 648 A.D. in the plains of Bihar, probably to the north of the river Ganges and not far from the river Gaṇḍakī.

The story reads more like romance than sober history, and it is difficult to say what amount of historical truth there is in it. For it is as difficult to accept the story of unprovoked hostility on the part of Arjuna as to believe in the utter rout of his army and thorough conquest of his country by 8,000 soldiers.

There is, however, no doubt that the Tibetan king Srong-Tsan Gampo was drawn into Indian politics, either in connection with the strange episode of Wang-Hiuen-Tse or in pursuance of his father's policy. Whether he actually conquered any part of Indian plains is not definitely known, but he is said to have conquered Assam and Nepal, and exercised suzerainty over half of Jambudvīpa.⁶³ There is hardly any doubt that Nepal was at this time a vassal State of Tibet and remained so for nearly two hundred years.

The reign-period of Srong-Tsan Gampo is not definitely known, but there is general agreement among scholars that he died about 650 A.D.⁶⁴ He was succeeded by his grandson Ki-li-pa-pu (650-679) who proved an extremely capable ruler. He inflicted a crushing defeat upon China in 670 A.D., and conquered Kashgar and the neighbouring regions in the North. In the South he is said to have extended his conquests as far as Central India,⁶⁵ but unfortunately no localities are specified.

In 702 Nepal and Central India revolted against Tibet. Nepal was subdued, and Central India, even if it did not send regular tribute, did not remain free from depredations. For, during the

period 713-41 A.D. an embassy from Central India came to China to seek for help against the Tibetans and the Arabs.⁶⁶

Lalitāditya Muktāpīḷa, the powerful king of Kashmir, was also engaged in hostilities against Tibet and sent an embassy to China between 736 and 747 A.D. He represented to the Imperial court, that in conjunction with the king of Central India he had closed the five roads leading from Tibet to India and obtained several victories against the Tibetans.⁶⁷ After Lalitāditya the task of keeping the Tibetans in check fell upon the Pāla kings of Bengal and further account of the relations between Tibet and India will be given in Chapter V.

APPENDIX II

THE EVIDENCE OF GAUḌA-VAHO

Dr. S.P. Pan̐lit, the learned editor of the *Gauḍa-vaho*, has assumed without any discussion that the Lord of Magadha mentioned in that poem was identical with the king of Gauḍa.⁶⁸

This assumption, though supported by Haripāla's commentary on *Gauḍa-vaho*,⁶⁹ rests only on evidence of a very indirect character. The principal argument, of course, is that unless the identity is assumed there remains no justification for the title of the book. But the learned editor himself admits that even such an assumption does not go very far in supporting or explaining the title. Thus he was constrained to remark as follows :

"But this mention of the Magadha king is made in the most incidental manner and with no direct purpose to refer to him as the hero who has given the name of the poem."⁷⁰

Another argument is supplied by internal evidence. After singing Yaśovarman's exploits the poet gives some personal accounts. We are told that one evening the poet was requested by an assembly of learned people to describe fully the manner in which Yaśovarman slew the lord of Magadha (v. 844). In reply the poet said, after describing in general terms the greatness of Yaśovarman in 228 verses, that he would sing next morning the *Gauḍa-vaho*, describing the destruction of many (or one) eastern kings. Next morning when the poet was going to relate the exploits of Yaśovarman to the learned assembly, the poets of the court talked among themselves about Yaśovarman's virtues and his prowess that had accomplished the death (*lit.* cut the throat) of the Gauḍa king (v. 1194). (This passing reference is the only allusion to the death of the Gauḍa king in the whole poem). The poet then began : "Hear the wonderful deeds of Yaśovarman." But here the poem ends.

Now it may be argued that as the *Gauḍa-vaho* was sung in response to the request to describe how Yaśovarman slew the lord of Magadha, the king of Magadha was the same as Lord of Gauḍa. It is, however, not quite inconceivable that the poet, in compliance with the request, proposed to give an account not only

of the king of Magadha, but also of the various eastern kings, including that of Gauḍa. It is evident from the abrupt end that he actually accomplished neither, and even if he did so, his work has not come down to us. This is also the view of the learned editor of the *Gauḍa-vaho*.⁷¹

On the whole, the union of Gauḍa and Magadha under one ruler may be a valid presumption but cannot be regarded as a proved fact, on the strength of the *Gauḍa-vaho*. Further, it is legitimate to infer that even if both Magadha and Gauḍa were under the same ruler, it was the ruler of Gauḍa who had Magadha under his sway rather than *vice-versa*. For otherwise there is no justification for the name *Gauḍa-vaho*.⁷²

Footnotes

- ¹ Watters, II. 182-193. *Beal—Records*. II. 193-204.
- ² The fallacy of this view has been pointed out in *JBORS*. IX. 312ff. and *IHQ*. XV. 122. But Dr. R. G. Basak repeats the same and even improves upon it. "The reason," says he, "for Yuan Chwang not mentioning the name of any king ruling in any of the four or five political divisions of Bengal at that period may be sought in the fact that when he visited (in 643 A.D.) these countries and also Kāmarūpa, he found most of them included in Harsha's own dominion, and some in that of Bhāskaravarman (Italics is ours)," *HNI*. 283. It may be mentioned in passing that Hiuen Tsang visited Bengal about 638 A.D. and not 643 A.D. as stated above (Watters, II. 335). Mr. Tripathi has merely echoed the old view without any fresh argument (*TK*. Chs. IV-V; *JBORS*. XVIII. 296 ff).
- ³ *Beal-Life*. 172.
- ⁴ This point was emphasised for the first time by Dr. D. C. Ganguly (*IHQ*. XV. 122 ff). It should be remembered, however, that the passage of Bhāskara's army and ships can also be explained by the assumption of Harsha's suzerainty over Bengal. Bhāskara's conquest of Bengal is assumed on the authority of Nidhanpur cp., but it is equally probable that after Śaśāṅka's death his dominions both in Bengal and Orissa were conquered by Harsha. The turmoil following the death of Harsha might have enabled Bhāskaravarman to conquer Bengal and pitch his victorious camp at Karṇasuvarṇa. In any case, he must have occupied Bengal by 648 A.D. when he is referred to as king of Eastern India in Chinese annals in connection with the expedition of Wang-Hiuen-Tse. This view has been fully developed in my book *Ancient India* (p. 258 of the 5th edition). For other views on the subject, cf. *HNI*. 279 ff. It is difficult to accept Dr. Basak's suggestion that Bhāskaravarman never conquered Karṇasuvarṇa, but merely pitched his temporary camp there, as an ally of Harsha during the latter's second campaign (*HNI*. First Edition pp. 228-9). It would have been highly impolitic, to say the least of it, on the part of Bhāskaravarman to issue a formal royal edict from a place which belonged not to him but to a mighty king like Harsha. Further, as noted above, he is definitely referred to as king of Eastern India in the Chinese annals. But Dr. Basak has changed his views. *Ibid.* 2nd Ed. 284-5.
- ⁵ *Beal-Life*. 172.
- ⁶ *Beal-Records*. II. 207.
- ⁷ *Ibid.* 118.
- ⁸ This may be inferred from the following statement by Ma-Twan-Lin : "In the fifteenth year of the Ching-Kiwan Period (641 A.D.) Śīlāditya assumed the title of king of Mo-kie-tho (Magadha) and sent an ambassador with a letter to the emperor" (*IA*. IX. (1880) 19).
- ⁹ It must be emphasised, that apart from conjectures based on pre-conceived notions about Harsha's military exploits, and inferences based on doubtful evidences of negative character, the only two positive references to Harsha's conquests in Eastern India are those of Magadha in 641 A.D., and Koṅgoda the following year (apart from a temporary court held at Kajaṅgala referred to

supra p. 72). The reasonable presumption, therefore, is that Harsha led victorious campaigns in these regions after, and not before, Śaśāṅka's death.

¹⁰ *IHI*. 58. The word *Gaṇajya* has been emended to *gaṇarājya*.

¹¹ *Nāgarāja-samāhveyo Gauḍa-rājā bhaviṣyati*

Ante tasya nṛipe tishthanī jayādya-varṇatadviśau || *MMK.* p. 636.

Jayaswal reads 'Nagārāja' in place of Nāgarāja (*MMK* (J). V. 750) and takes Nāgarāja to be the name of the king and regards him as belonging to the Bhāraṣiva dynasty (*IHI*. 51).

¹² For Jayanāga's coins cf. Allan, *CCBM*. LXI, CIV., 150-151. The coins bear the name *Jaya* and there is no doubt now that they were issued by Jayanāga (*EI*. XVIII. 6).

¹³ Vappaghoshavāṭa Grant (*EI*. XVIII. 60 ff), or Malliya Grant (*ABORI*. XIX. 81). It records a grant of land situated in Audumbarika-*vishaya* which has been identified with Audambar *Pargana* mentioned in *Āin-i-Akbarī*. It comprised the greater part of Birbhum and a part of the Murshidabad district (*EI*. XIX. 286-87). *Sāmanta* Nārāyaṇabhadra was the ruler of this *vishaya* at the time of the grant.

¹⁴ Dr. R. G. Basak writes : "The *Mañjuśrī-mūlākālpa* makes Jayanāga almost a successor of Śaśāṅka but in our opinion, he and his son (stated to have reigned for a few months only) preceded Śaśāṅka as kings of Kārṇasuvarṇa" (*HNI*. 166). Dr. Basak gives no reason, and in the absence of more reliable evidence or cogent arguments to the contrary, it is better to accept the tradition recorded in *MMK*. Dr. Basak refers to a son of Jayanāga, but *MMK*. refers to the son of Śaśāṅka, and not of Jayanāga, as having ruled for eight months and five days. It is just possible that Jayanāga ruled after the death of Śaśāṅka and before the conquest of Kārṇasuvarṇa by Bhāskaravarman.

¹⁵ *Lévi-Nepal*. II. 174. *HCIP*. III. 86.

¹⁶ *HCIP*. III. 141.

¹⁷ *EHBR*. 24. It must be noted, however, that important persons with the title Khādgi are mentioned in Mallasarul Ins. (6th cent. A.D.) (*EI*. XXIII. 159).

¹⁸ *Lévi-Nepal*. II. 174-75.

¹⁹ See footnote 8 above.

²⁰ The history of Ādityasena and his successors, Devagupta, Viṣṇugupta and Jivitagupta II is known from six inscriptions (*CII*. III. Nos. 42-46 and Vaidyanātha Temple Ins. at Deoghar (*CII*. III. p. 213 f. n.). All the four kings bear imperial titles *viz.*, *Paramabhaṭṭāraka* and *Mahārājādhirāja*. All their records have been found in Bihar. No. 46 was issued from the *Jayaskandhāvāra* of Gomatikoṭṭaka and Fleet suggests that it was on the bank of the river Gomatī. This is, however, by no means certain. The only other evidence of their rule outside Bihar is furnished by the Vaidyanātha Temple Ins. of which no facsimile is published, and which was written in Maithila character (*JASB*. LII. 190-91). It says that Ādityasena, having arrived from the Chola city, performed three *Āśvamedha* and other sacrifices. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri thinks that these Later Gupta kings are referred to as Lords of the whole of Uttarā-patha (*sakal-ottarāpatha-nātha*) (*PHAI*. 4th ed., pp. 516-17). No 43 gives the date 66 for Ādityasena, which, referred to Harsha

Era, would be equivalent to 672 A.D. Ādityasena and his three successors may be placed approximately between 650 and 725 A.D.

²¹ Dr. R. G. Basak thinks that 'Bengal, specially the Southern Rāḍhā and Vaṅga' probably formed parts of Ādityasena's dominions as he extended his conquests towards the shores of the ocean (*HNI*. 151). He evidently relies on the statement in the Vaidyanātha Temple Ins. that Ādityasena conquered the whole earth upto the shore of the four oceans. But such praises are too conventional to be regarded seriously. Nor can we infer the supremacy of the Later Guptas in Bengal from the very hypothetical proposition that they were Lords of Uttarāpatha (see foot note 20 above.)

²² Ragholi cp. (*EI*. IX. 41).

²³ Cf. Belava cp. I. 27. *IB*. 20. But Jain *Bhagavaiṣ Sūtra* refers to Puṇḍra country at the foot of the Vindhya (*HCIP*. II, 463).

²⁴ *DHNI*. I. 276. *HCIP*. III, 146-7.

²⁵ *Gauḍa-vaho*, edited by Śaṅkar Pāṇḍurang Paṇḍit (Bombay, 1887).

²⁶ The conquest of Magadha is perhaps to be credited to the Śaila rulers of Northern Bengal. As noted above, two other branches of this family ruled in Vindhya region and Benares, and this circumstance must have helped the Śaila ruler of Bengal to wrest the supremacy of Magadha, probably from Jivitagupta II, the last known ruler of the Later Guptas, who reigned in the first half of the eighth century A.D.

²⁷ For different views, cf. *Gauḍa-vaho*, 2nd ed., pp. cclvi ff.

²⁸ *RT*. IV. 148. Dr. H. C. Ray states that Lalitāditya "reached the Gauḍa land" (*DHNI*. I. 277). This is, however, by no means certain though very probable. In any case *RT*. does not refer to Lalitāditya's march to Gauḍa.

²⁹ *RT*. IV. 323-30.

³⁰ *RT*. IV. 332, 335.

³¹ *RT*. IV. 402-468.

³² Paśupati Ins. dated year 159. This year is usually referred to the Harsha Era (*HNI*. 342), but Jayaswal refers this and other dates in Nepalese records to a new era starting in 595 A.D. (*JBORS*. XXII. 164 ff, 184). But most probably the year 159 corresponds to A.D. 736. (cf. *JAS*. vol. 1, No. 1, 1959, p. 49).

³³ *GR*. 17-18 ; *DHNI*. I. 241 ; Lévi-Nepal. II. 171. Harsha is usually identified with king Harsha mentioned in Tejpur cp. of Vanamāla (*JASB*. IX. Part II, 766 ; *Kām. Śās*. 54).

³⁴ Cf. Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara (*JBORS*. 1928, p. 304). Some scholars, while holding Harsha to be a king of the Kara dynasty, believes him also to be a descendant of Bhāskaravarman (*IHQ*. XIV. 841). It may be incidentally mentioned that another line of kings, claiming descent from Bhagadatta and bearing imperial titles, ruled in the North-West Frontier of India, in the tract up the Gilgit river in the sixth century A.D. (*Bhāratīya Vidyā* No. 6, June, 1945, Bombay, p. 111 ff.)

³⁵ It is difficult to ascertain the boundaries of Samatāṭa which must have varied at different ages. The district of Tippera was definitely included in it (see *supra* p. 8). The account of Hiuen Tsang, however, shows that Samatāṭa was an extensive kingdom in his days. "This country," says he, "which was on the sea side and was low and moist, was more than 3,000 li in circuit"

(Watters, II. 187). From Samataṭa the "pilgrim journeyed west for over 900 *li* to Tāmralipti." (*Ibid.* 189). From these indications the kingdom of Samataṭa in the 7th century A.D. may be reasonably regarded as having comprised the area bounded by the old course of the lower Brahmaputra river in the north, Chittagong Hills in the east, and the Bay of Bengal on the south. The western boundary was perhaps formed by a branch of the old Ganges (Padmā) corresponding to modern Gorai and Madhumati rivers. Cunningham held that Samataṭa denoted the delta of the Ganges and its chief city occupied the site of modern Jessore. Fergusson and Watters identified it respectively with Dacca and Faridpur districts. (Watters, II. 188).

³⁶ Watters, II. 109.

³⁷ *IC.* II. 795-97. As mentioned in foot note 13 above, a vassal chief Nārāyaṇa-bhadra is mentioned in the Ins. of Jayanāga.

³⁸ *EI.* XVII. 351 ; *JASB.* N. S. X. 87.

³⁹ *BI.* 233 ; *MASB.* I. No. 6. pp. 85ff.

⁴⁰ *JASB.* N. S. XIX. 378 ; *JASB.* N. S. X. 86 ; *HNI.* 253-4.

⁴¹ *Beal-Life.* XL—XLI ; Chavannes, *Religieux Eminents (I-tsing)*, p. 128, f.n. 3.

⁴² *JASB.* N. S. XIX. 378 ; *HNI.* 258-9.

⁴³ *IHQ.* XIV. 534.

⁴⁴ *Beal-Life.* XXXVI—XXXVII ; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 83 ; *IHQ.* XIV. 534.

⁴⁵ Dr. R. G. Basak was presumably led to this view (*HNI.* 154, 258) by the mistaken belief that the land granted by the king was situated near Mahābodhi temple in Gayā, whereas, as noted above (p.37), it was more than two hundred miles further to the east in Bengal.

⁴⁶ *JASB.* N. S. XIX. 378.

⁴⁷ Bodh-Gayā is referred to as situated in Mid-India in connection with the biography of Hiuen-Ta'i (*Beal-Life.* XXX ; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 35).

⁴⁸ Takakusu-*I-tsing.* pp. xxxi. xlvi ; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 121, 106 ; *Beal-Life.* XL-XLI. Tāmralipti is called the southern district of Eastern India from which people went towards Mid-India, showing that it was on the south-western border of East India.

⁴⁹ Lévi, S., *Le Nepal*, I. 254.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 228 ; Vol. II, pp. 304, 352.

⁵¹ This view was first propounded by the author of this book in *The Early History of Bengal* (published in 1924 by the University of Dacca), pp. 23-4. For a possible Tibetan invasion before Harsha see Appendix I to this Chapter.

⁵² *EI.* XV. 301-315. *Sāmanta* Lokanātha is also mentioned in Kalapur *CP* (A.38) but no details can be learnt owing to the damaged state of the record.

⁵³ *IHQ.* XXIII. 230 ff.

⁵⁴ For a fuller account cf. *HNI.* 238 ff.

⁵⁵ *IA.* LXI. 44.

⁵⁶ *HNI.* 240.

⁵⁷ *EHBP.* 29 II ; *IC.* . 37-45. Dr. D. C. Sircar thinks that the Khadgas were originally feudatories of the Gauḍa king but later became semi-independent, like the Rātas after Gauḍa had been temporarily subdued by the kings of Kanauj and Kāmarūpa in the second quarter of the seventh century (*IHQ.* XXIII, 230).

According to R. G. Basak the line of feudatory chiefs ending with Lokanātha "must have been subject to the lord-paramountcy, either of the East Bengal rulers of the Faridpur grants or that of the Later Gupta Dynasty of Magadha (*HNI*, 238). "But while he places Lokanātha in 663-4 A.D. (*HNI*, p. 240), elsewhere in the same book (p. 232) he places the reigns of the three Eastern Bengal rulers in the last three quarters of the 6th century A.D. Further, he denies that the Later Guptas ever ruled over Gauda (*HNI*, 167), and it is therefore difficult to understand how they came to exercise suzerainty over East Bengal, for which assumption there is not the least evidence, direct or indirect such as we possess about the rule of the Later Guptas over Gauda.

⁵⁸ For references to Tāranātha's account in this chapter cf. App. II, to Ch. v. *infra*.

⁵⁹ Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 147, 153-4.

⁶⁰ Lévi's view has been refuted by K. P. Jayaswal (*JBORS*. XXII. 172). Some other views on the origin of Bengali *San* have been summarised by D. Trivedi in *JIH*. XIX. 292 ff.

⁶¹ The account of Srong-tsan Gampo (or Sron-btsan-sgam-po) is based on the following authorities :

- a. *The Chronicles of Ladakh* (translated by Francke in *Antiquities of Tibet*, Part II, pp. 82-84).
- b. *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh* by Dr. L. Petech (published as a supplement to *IHQ*. XV), Ch. v.
- c. Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 148-152.
- d. Sarat Chandra Das's account [*JASB*. L. (1881). Part I, pp. 218-224]. (This is somewhat antiquated and should be read in the light of Nos. a-c).

L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, Ch. III.

⁶² *JA*. 9e. Serie, t. xv. (1900), pp. 297 ff. It appears that the mission of Wang-hiuen-tse was sent to Magadha and presumably the incidents took place there. The Chinese form of the name of the Indian king may mean O-lo-na-shun, king of Ti-na-fu-ti (p. 300, f.n. 2). The latter may stand for Tīrabhukti (North Bihar).

⁶³ Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 148.

⁶⁴ Tibetan historians give various dates for the birth of Srong-tsan Gampo, ranging between 600 and 617 A.D. (*JASB*. L. 218). According to Dr. Petech. "it is established with certainty that Srong-tsan Gampo was born in 569 A.D. and reigned from 620 to 650 A.D." (*op. cit.*, pp. 47-48). Lévi (*Nepal*, II. 173) and Thomas (*Literary Texts*, 49) also place the king's death at 650, the latter assigning him the date 600-650 A.D. Francke notes that the Chinese date for the king is 600-650 A.D. (*op. cit.*).

⁶⁵ Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 174. I do not know the authority for Sir R. C. Temple's assertion that "at this period Tibetan rule must have spread southwards far into Bengal" (*IA*. 1916, p. 39).

⁶⁶ Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 174-75.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*. 175.

⁶⁸ *GV*. XXIV, XLII.

⁶⁹ Cf. commentary on v. 844.

⁷⁰ *GV* XLIII.

⁷¹ *GV*. XLVIII. For a summary of the various opinions expressed by scholars on this subject cf. Supplementary Notes (pp. ccxxxix-cclv) by Utgikar in the second edition of *Gauḍa-vaho*, published by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (Poona, 1927).

⁷² According to N. B. Utgikar, "the reason for the selection of the name of the Gauda king in preference to other kings subjugated by Yaśovarman, to form the designation of a highly-pitched poem, may possibly have to be sought for in the latent ill-will that can historically be proved to have existed between the two kingdoms of Kanauj and Gauda before the time of Yaśovarman" (2nd ed., p. cclii). This explanation is, however, hardly convincing.

CHAPTER V

THE PĀLAS

THE rule of the Pāla dynasty from about the middle of the eighth century A.D. marks a new epoch in the history of Bengal. For the first time the historian has the advantage of being able to follow, in the main, the fortunes of a single ruling dynasty, the order of succession of whose long line of kings is precisely known and whose chronology may be fixed with a tolerable degree of certainty. The advantage does not forsake him till the end of the Hindu period, in spite of occasional political disintegration and the rise of local dynasties ruling in various parts of the province.

The history of the Pālas, extending over four centuries, may be divided into the following stages :

- I. The Origin and Early History of the Pālas.
- II. The Pāla Empire.
- III. The Decline and Fall of the Empire.
- IV. Restoration.
- V. The Break-up of the Pāla Kingdom.
- VI. Disintegration and Temporary Revival.
- VII. The End of the Pāla Rule.

I. THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE PĀLAS

The anarchy and confusion which prevailed in Bengal¹ for more than a century led to a natural reaction. The people, who had suffered untold miseries for a long period, suddenly developed a political wisdom and a spirit of self-sacrifice to which there is no recorded parallel in the history of Bengal. They perceived that the establishment of a single strong central authority offered the only effective remedy against political disintegration within and invasions from abroad to which their unhappy land was so long a victim. They also realised that such a happy state of things could only be brought about by the voluntary surrender of authority to one person by the numerous petty chiefs who had been exercising independent political authority in different parts of the country. The ideal of subordinating individual interests to a national cause was not as

common in India in the eighth century A.D. as it was in Europe a thousand years later. Our admiration is, therefore, all the greater, that without any struggle the independent political chiefs recognised the suzerainty of a popular hero named Gopāla.) Thus took place a bloodless revolution which both in its spirit and subsequent results reminds us of what happened in Japan about A.D. 1870.)

Unfortunately this memorable episode in the history of Bengal is known to us only in brief outline, and details are altogether lacking. The Khalimpur copper-plate (B. 2) issued in the 32nd year of the reign of Dharmapāla, refers to this event in the following couplet :

mātsyanyāyam=apohitum prakṛitibhir=lakṣmyāḥ karaṁ
grāhitaḥ ||
śrī-Gopāla=iti kṣhitiśa-śirasām chūḍāmaṇis=tat-sutaḥ/

Kielhorn translates the above as follows :

“His son was the crest-jewel of the heads of kings, the glorious Gopāla, whom the people made take the hand of Fortune, to put an end to the practice of fishes.”

In a footnote to the above, Kielhorn adds : “Gopāla was made king by the people to put an end to a lawless state of things in which everyone was the prey of his neighbour.” He also cites authority for his interpretation of the phrase ‘*mātsya-nyāya*.’)

Now there is no dispute regarding the general interpretation of the above passage, viz., that Gopāla was made king in order to put an end to the state of anarchy which prevailed in Bengal. The only point that is open to discussion is the agency that made him king. According to the couplet referred to above ‘Gopāla was made king by the ‘*prakṛitis*.’ The common meaning of the word is ‘subject,’ and it has consequently been held that Gopāla was elected king by the general body of people.² Although this view has met with general acceptance, it is open to doubt whether the passage refers to anything like a regular election by the general mass of people, and, if so, whether this was at all practicable in those days and in such abnormal times. It would, perhaps, be more reasonable to hold that the choice was originally made by the leading chiefs, and was subsequently endorsed and acclaimed by the people. This may well be regarded as tantamount to an ‘election by the people’ referred to in the Khalimpur copper-plate.

It has been suggested on the other hand that '*prakṛiti*' should be taken as a technical term meaning principal officers, and that Gopāla was placed on the throne by the principal officers of the State.³ This view is supported by an instance recorded in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, viz., the election of Jalauka as king by a group of seven officials called '*prakṛitis*.' It must be remembered, however, that such election is possible, and even very probable, only when there is a strong and stable government exercising authority over the whole kingdom. In the absence of such a central government, we can hardly think of ministers or a set of permanent officials who could offer the throne to a nominee of their own. If we presume, as we must, that a central political authority exercising any sort of control over the whole of Gauḍa or Vaṅga had ceased to function (for a long period, and the country was divided into a large number of independent principalities, we can scarcely think of a group of officials (presumably of one of these States) placing somebody on the throne of Bengal, or a considerable portion of the province.

On the whole, therefore, we are justified in holding the view that Gopāla was called to the throne by the voice of the people, though perhaps the selection was originally made by a group of leaders or independent ruling chiefs.

Although this remarkable episode has not been referred to in Indian literature, and its very memory has now vanished from Bengal, it was a living tradition among the people even so late as the sixteenth century A.D. This is proved by the curious story recorded by the Tibetan historian Lāmā Tāranātha.⁴

Unfortunately we possess very meagre information about the life and reign of Gopāla. His father Vapyāṭa and grandfather Dayitavishṇu are referred to in very general terms in the official records, and there is nothing to indicate that they were ruling chiefs. Vapyāṭa is called 'destroyer of foes,' but this does not imply anything more than that he was, perhaps, a military chief.⁵

In a commentary to *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* composed by Haribhadra, during the reign of Dharmapāla, he is described as *Rājabhāṭa-vamśa-patita*.⁶ MM. Haraprasād Śāstrī identified this Dharmapāla with the son of Gopāla and concluded that Dharmapāla belonged "to the family of a military officer of some king." Others have taken Rājabhāṭa as a personal name, and identified him with the king of the same name ruling in Samatāṭa when Sheng-chi came to India towards the close of the seventh century A.D.⁸ This

Rājabhaṭa may be identified with the heir apparent of Devakhaḍga named in official records of the dynasty as Rājarāja and Rājarāja-Bhaṭa.⁹ The passage cited by MM. Haraprasāda Śāstrī would thus lead to the conclusion that the Pālas were connected in some way with the Khaḍgas. The fact that the Khaḍgas were Buddhists, like the Pālas, and were ruling in Eastern Bengal, shortly before the accession of Gopāla, undoubtedly strengthens this presumption. On the other hand, apart from the questionable interpretation of Rājabhaṭa as a personal name, the word '*patita*' creates considerable difficulty. There is no warrant for the assumption that it means 'descended by the female line.'¹⁰ It is normally used in a derogatory sense such as 'fallen', 'outcast', *etc.*, and scarcely ever in the sense of 'being descended from,' though the latter meaning is not altogether unknown.¹¹ It should further be noted that there is no definite evidence justifying the identification of Dharmapāla, the patron of Haribhadra, with the famous Pāla king of that name.

Some scholars have traced a subtle reference to the royal family of Dharmapāla's mother in the fifth verse of Khalimpur copper-plate (Ins. No 2). In this verse Deddadevī, the wife of Gopāla is compared to the wives of the deities Moon, Agni (Fire), Śiva, Kuvera, Indra, and Viṣṇu.¹² In course of the comparison, the word '*Bhadrātmajā*' is used immediately after Bhadrā, the name of Kuvera's wife. Kielhorn, while translating this verse, took '*Bhadrātmajā*' as an epithet qualifying Deddadevī, and translated it as 'a daughter of the Bhadra king,' regarding Bhadra as a tribal or family name. Mr. Akshaya Kumar Maitreya, on the other hand, took '*Bhadrātmajā*' as an ordinary adjective to Bhadrā meaning daughter of a gentleman. It must be confessed, however, that there is hardly any point in applying such a colourless epithet to Bhadrā alone of all the goddesses mentioned in the verse. Kielhorn, therefore, may be right in his interpretation, and Deddadevī might belong to the royal Bhadra family referred to in the last chapter.¹³

It would thus appear that we have hardly any definite information regarding the origin of the royal Pāla family. Strangely enough, unlike other mediaeval records, we do not find any mythical pedigree of the dynasty in the Pāla inscriptions. In the Kamauli Plate of Vaidyadeva (B. 94), who was originally the minister of a Pāla king, Vighrahapāla III is said to have belonged to the solar dynasty.¹⁴ According to the commentary of Sandhyākara Nandī's

Rāmacharita (I. 4), Dharmapāla was 'the light of Samudra's race' (*samudra-kula-dīpa*) i. e., descended from the ocean.¹⁵ It may be noted that both the records belong to the very end of the Pāla period, more than three hundred and fifty years after the accession of Gopāla, and naturally very little weight attaches to the theories contained in them about the origin of the dynasty. Besides, the membership of the solar or lunar family was commonly claimed for most of the royal houses of those days, and there is nothing distinctive about it. The descent from the *samudra* or ocean has undoubtedly more novelty in it. A distant echo of this may be traced in an old Bengali text called *Dharma-maṅgala* composed by Ghanarāma.¹⁶ It records that Dharmapāla had no son and his queen Vallabhadevī was banished to a forest. There she had a liaison with the ocean and a son was born to her. This silly story gives a wrong name for Dharmapāla's queen, and describes her as a devout Vaishṇava and devoted to the Brāhmaṇas.

Tāranātha tells us that Gopāla was succeeded by a son whom Nāgarāja Sagarapāla, the sovereign of the ocean, begot on his younger queen.¹⁷ This is evidently another version of the origin of the Pālas from *samudra* or ocean. These stories are too silly to be seriously considered,¹⁸ and do not help us in the least in tracing the ancestry of the Pālas. An attempt has been made to reconcile the two different traditions of *samudra* and *sūrya* origin by holding that *samudra-kula* means *sūrya-kula* or solar race to which Samudra, the son of the mythical king Sagara, belonged.¹⁹

As to the caste of the Pālas the commentary on a verse of *Rāmacharita* (I, 17) distinctly says that Rāmapāla was born of a Kshatriya king. Tāranātha tells us that Gopāla was begotten on a Kshatriya woman by the Tree-God.²⁰ It may be readily believed, therefore, that the Pālas, like most of the ruling families in mediaeval India, were regarded as Kshatriyas. This view is corroborated by the matrimonial relations of the Pālas with the Rāshṭrakūṭas and the Kalachuris. But according to that curious work *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, which refers to kings only by the first letter of the name, kings, who have been identified with the Pālas, are said to be of menial caste.²¹ Abu-'l-Fazl calls the Pālas Kāyasthas.²² But the value of the last two evidences is not very great, and they need not be seriously considered.

(Perhaps one of the reasons why no reference to the origin and caste of the Pālas occurs in their own records is the fact that they

were Buddhists and did not care very much to adopt Brāhmanical institutions or traditions. The copper-plates of the Pālas begin with an invocation to Lord Buddha, and many kings of the dynasty are known to have been great patrons of Buddhism. According to the Tibetan tradition,²³ Gopāla founded a Vihāra or monastery at Nālandā and established many religious schools. Tāranātha, as usual, gives a long list of Buddhist teachers who flourished during this reign. Whether Gopāla himself first adopted Buddhism, or whether he was born in a Buddhist family, it is not possible to determine. But certain it is that the successors of Gopāla were all ardent followers of Buddhism, and for nearly four hundred years their court proved to be the last stronghold of that dying faith in India. For this reason the Pāla kings enjoyed an important position in the international Buddhist world, and they maintained intact the fountain-head of later Buddhism from which streams flowed to Tibet in the north and the Indian archipelago in the south-east.

As in the case of the origin of the family, uncertainty also hangs over the location of the original kingdom of Gopāla. The inscriptions do not supply any definite information on the point. The fact that during the first two hundred years of the Pāla rule, covering the reigns of eight kings, almost all the copper-plate grants were issued from victorious camps in Magadha, and all the other inscriptions, with only a single exception, belonged to that region, naturally led many to conclude that the Pālas originally ruled in Magadha and subsequently conquered Bengal. But this view can hardly be maintained in the light of positive evidences which have come to light in recent years.

In the first place, the *Rāmacharita* definitely refers to Varendrī as the '*janakabhūḥ*' or ancestral home of the Pālas. Secondly, the Gwalior inscription refers to the adversary of Nāgabhaṭa, who can hardly be anybody other than Dharmapāla, as *Vaṅgapati*. These two evidences make it almost certain that the home and the original kingdom of the Pālas must be placed in Bengal. This is indirectly supported by the Bādāl Pillar inscription which says that Dharmapāla, to begin with, was only the ruler of the east, and gradually spread his dominions in other directions.

We should, of course, remember that Varendra (also called Varendrī) denoted the northern, and Vaṅga, the eastern and south-eastern part of Bengal. The evidences of *Rāmacharita* and Gwalior inscription might, therefore, appear to be contradictory, unless we

regard Vaṅga as denoting the whole province of Bengal. Such an use of the name Vaṅga can, however, be justified or explained only on the supposition that the Pālas were originally the rulers of Vaṅga, and the name came to be applied to the rest of the province with the growth of their dominions. The conflicting nature of the two evidences, therefore, still remains. Perhaps Tāranātha's account supplies the best solution of the difficulty, viz., that Gopāla was born of a Kshatriya family near Puṇḍravardhana, but was subsequently elected ruler of Bhaṅgala undoubtedly a corrupt form of Vaṅgāla.²⁴ This is confirmed by the reference to Dharmapāla as king of Vaṅgāla in a contemporary Rāshṭrakūṭa record, as mentioned above (p. 11).

• But whatever may have been the limits of the original kingdom of Gopāla,²⁵ it is reasonable to hold that he consolidated his authority over the whole of Bengal. In the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (Ins. No. B. 8), Gopāla is said to have conquered the earth as far as the sea. This, of course, does not mean much. But it is difficult to believe that his son and successor Dharmapāla could carry on victorious campaigns up to the Punjab, unless he had inherited from his father at least the consolidated kingdom of Bengal.

From the time of Nārāyaṇapāla onwards the copper-plate grants of the Pāla kings begin with a verse which is a eulogy both of Buddha and Gopāla. Naturally all the epithets are equally applicable to both of them. One of these runs as follows :

*Jitvā yaḥ kāmaka-āri-prabhavam-abhibhavain śāśvatīm-
prāpa śāntīm*

In the case of Gopāla, the passage seems to mean that he established peace in his kingdom by having defeated the attacks of the oppressors or tyrants, the expression 'kāmaka-āri' meaning those who do not acknowledge any control and act wilfully. The reference in this case is, of course, to the period of anarchy and political disintegration that prevailed before the accession of Gopāla. It has been suggested, however, that 'kāmaka-āri' means 'king of Kāmarūpa, who is an enemy,' Kāma, with the pleonastic suffix ka, standing for Kāmarūpa, under the well-known Sanskrit aphorism that part of a name may be substituted for the full name.²⁶ It is unreasonable to rule out the interpretation altogether, but it

is to be seriously considered whether such an achievement of Gopāla, as the conquest of Assam, or of Magadha (as noted by Tāranātha), would not have been more directly stated in the official records, if it were a fact. Besides, as we shall see later, Kāmarūpa was conquered in the time of Devapāla.

• On the whole, therefore, it would be safe to conclude that the main achievement of Gopāla was the establishment of durable peace in Bengal by bringing under control the turbulent elements in the province. That the reign of Gopāla ended in peaceful pursuits and not adventurous military expeditions is also hinted at in verse 3 of the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (B.8).²⁷ •

The reign-period of Gopāla is not definitely known. According to Tāranātha, he ruled for forty-five years,²⁸ but this statement cannot be accepted without corroboration. According to *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*,²⁹ his reign-period was twenty-seven years. His accession to the throne may be placed with a tolerable degree of certainty within a decade of 750 A.D., and he probably ceased to rule about 770 A.D.³⁰ The fact that he was called to the throne at a critical moment shows that he must have been fairly advanced in age, and given proof of his prowess and ability. It is not likely, therefore, that he ruled for a very long time. According to *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, he died at the advanced age of eighty.³¹ This is hardly likely, as we know that his son and grandson ruled respectively for at least thirty-two and thirty-five years.

II. THE PĀLA EMPIRE

1 *Dharmapāla* (c. 770-810 A.D.)

(Gopāla was succeeded in c. 770 A.D. by his son Dharmapāla) who was destined to raise the Pāla kingdom to the high-water mark of glory and power. But before we describe his life and reign, it is necessary to pass in rapid review (the political condition of India at the time)

(In the Deccan, the Rāshtrakūṭas had wrested the political power from the Chālukyas, and established themselves as the ruling dynasty in 753 A.D., i. e., about the time when Gopāla ascended the throne. Two powerful rulers of this dynasty, Dhruva (c. 780-794) and his son Govinda III (c. 794-814), sent strong military expeditions to extend their powers in Northern India, and brilliant, though temporary, successes attended their efforts.³²

(Their chief adversaries in the north were the Pratihāras.) It is not necessary for our present purpose to enter into the controversial details about the early history of the dynasty. It will suffice to say that Vatsarāja, an early ruler of this dynasty, and one of whose known dates is 783-84 A.D., was a powerful king who not only consolidated his power in Mālava and Rājputāna, but also tried to extend his conquests to Eastern India.³³ In particular, he defeated the lord of Gauḍa. His success was, however, shortlived. He was defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭa king Dhruva who completed his triumph by defeating the lord of Gauḍa in the Ganges-Jumna Doab.

It would thus appear that shortly after his accession to the throne, Dharmapāla was involved in a tripartite struggle between the three chief ruling powers of India. It is difficult to follow the exact course of this struggle in strict chronological order, as the few isolated facts, known to us from the inscriptions of the three dynasties, are capable of different interpretations. We can only trace what seems to be the most probable trend of events in the light of all available materials.

The fight between the Gauḍas and the Pratihāras was the natural consequence of the imperial designs of both these powers. Dharmapāla inherited a consolidated and powerful kingdom and began to expand his dominions towards the west, where the political situation was admirably suited to his ambition. With the passing away of Yaśovarman and Lalitāditya, no great power or political personality arose in Northern India and for nearly half a century it offered a most tempting field to every ambitious political adventurer. Dharmapāla seized the opportunity and rapidly pushed his conquests towards the west. Unluckily for him, Vatsarāja, the king of the Pratihāras, also felt the same urge of imperial ambitions and utilised the same opportunity by pushing his conquest towards the north and east. In the light of subsequent events, one might safely conclude that the possession of the imperial city of Kanauj was the common objective of both, and the contending parties probably came into clash somewhere in the Doab.³⁴ Dharmapāla was defeated in this encounter, and the effect of this reverse might have been serious, but for the providential incursion of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Dhruva who inflicted a disastrous defeat upon Vatsarāja.

After defeating Vatsarāja, Dhruva evidently marched through his dominions right up to the Doab. Here he met Dharmapāla³⁵.

and defeated him. But this was not evidently a lasting victory with any serious consequence to Dharmapāla.³⁶ Dhruva was too far away from his base to follow up his victory, and there were probably other causes to induce him to turn back. In any case, he shortly returned to the Deccan.³⁷

In spite of his reverses, Dharmapāla derived the greatest benefit from Dhruva's campaign. His mighty opponent Vatsarāja was a 'fugitive in the trackless desert', while his (Vatsarāja's) dominions were trampled under feet by the victorious Kaṇṇaṭṭa army. For some time to come Dharmapāla had no more fear of opposition from that quarter. So he continued his victorious campaign, and, emboldened by success, advanced to the furthest limits of Northern India.

The full account of this wonderful military campaign is not known, but a few important details have been preserved in the Pāla records. According to v. 3 of the Bhagalpur copper-plate of Nārāyaṇapāla (B. 18), Dharmapāla acquired the sovereignty of Mahodaya (*i.e.*, Kanauj) by having defeated Indrarāja³⁸ and other enemies, and conferred it upon Chakrāyudha.

That Dharmapāla proceeded far beyond Kanauj in the course of his military campaigns is proved by v. 7 of the Monghyr copper-plate (B 8). It tells us that in the course of the victorious campaigns of Dharmapāla, his attendants performed religious rites at Kedāra, Gokarṇa, the confluence of the Ganges and the sea and various other holy places. Kedāra is undoubtedly the famous place of pilgrimage on the Himālayas in Gharwal, and although Gokarṇa cannot be definitely identified,³⁹ the verse leaves no doubt that 'Dharmapāla practically overran the greater part of Northern India.'

In the light of the above facts, we can understand the full significance of verse 12 of the Khalimpur copper-plate of Dharmapāla (B. 2).⁴⁰ It describes how Dharmapāla installed the king of Kānyakubja in the presence of the chiefs of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhāra, and Kīra, who uttered acclamations of approval, bowing down respectfully with their diadems trembling. (There can be hardly any doubt that the king of Kanyakubja referred to in this passage was Chakrāyudha. It would appear that at the conclusion of his victorious campaign, Dharmapāla held an imperial assembly or *Durbar* at Kanauj whose sovereignty he had acquired by his own prowess.) The *Durbar* was attended by the vassal chiefs named above, who all witnessed the

installations of Chakrāyudhu by Dharmapāla as his vassal chief of Kanauj.

✓ This famous scene represents the culmination of Dharmapāla's triumph, and testifies to the formal assumption by him of the position of suzerain of Northern India which he had earned by defeating various kings. The categorical statement that the chiefs of various States assembled in Kanauj, and bowed their heads in approval of the coronation ceremony held by the command of Dharmapāla, leaves no doubt that they all acknowledged his suzerainty, though it is conceivable that some of them might have offered homage and submission even though they were not actually defeated in battle. It would indeed be fantastic to suppose that although they were all independent chiefs, in no way subordinate to Dharmapāla, they had come all the way to Kanauj only to approve of the settlement of political affairs in that city 'by way of diplomatic gesture.'⁴¹ The expression '*pranāti-parīṇataiḥ*' hardly leaves any doubt about their status *vis a vis* Dharmapāla.

Fortunately, we have got an independent positive evidence in support of the view that Dharmapāla held the position of a suzerain in North India. / In the *Udayasundarī-kathā*, a *champū-kāvya* composed in the first-half of the eleventh century A.D. by Soḍḍhala, a Gujarāṭi poet, king Dharmapāla is referred to as *Uttarāpāthasvāmin* or lord of Uttarāpātha.⁴² This Dharmapāla can only refer to the Pāla emperor of the name. The expression *Pañcha-Gauḍa* is also possibly reminiscent of the Gauḍa empire of Dharmapāla.⁴³

An idea of the extent of Dharmapāla's empire may be obtained if we can definitely locate the States mentioned in v. 12 of the Khalimpur copper-plate. Among them the kingdoms of Gandhāra, Madra, and Kuru are well-known, and were situated respectively in the western, central, and eastern Punjab, while Kīra corresponds to the Kangra district in the north-eastern part of the same province.⁴⁴ Matsya corresponds to modern Alwar State with parts of Jaipur and Bharatpur, while Avanti is certainly modern Malwa. Bhoja, Yadu, and Yavana countries cannot be located with certainty. The last-named probably refers to an Arab principality, either in the Indus Valley or the North-Western Frontier Province. The Yadus or Yādavas ruled over the kingdom of Simhapura in the Punjab,⁴⁵ but other regions like Mathurā and Dvārakā are also traditionally associated with them, and it cannot be exactly ascertained which section of the Yādavas accepted the suzerainty

of Dharmapāla. In view, however, of the fact that the list includes several other States in the Punjab, the Yadu principality of Simhapura is probably meant. As regards the Bhojas they are an ancient people, and the kingdom of Bhojakaṭa, mentioned in Vākāṭaka copper-plates, includes at least a part of Berar, if not the whole of it.⁴⁶ Thus on the whole, it may be safely concluded that Dharmapāla exercised his imperial sway over the Punjab, Eastern Rājputāna, Malwa and Berar, and this was the result of the victorious military campaigns which carried him as far as Kedāra in the western Himālayas. and in the course of which he defeated Indrarāja and other kings.

✓ It must be borne in mind, however, that the empire of Dharmapāla was not like that of the Mauryas or Guptas, or even of the later Pratīhāras. The vassal States were not annexed to the central dominions of emperor, and their rulers were left undisturbed so long as they acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor, and rendered such homage and military assistance as might have been fixed by usage or treaties. So we cannot regard the Punjab, Eastern Rājputāna, Malwa, and Berar as integral parts of a consolidated dominion under the direct rule of the emperor. This is clearly indicated in verse 8 of the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (B. 8), and is in consonance with the available evidences in our possession. ✓

The kingdom of Kanauj, roughly corresponding to modern U.P., evidently stood on a different footing. Dharmapāla not only conquered it but drove its ruler away, and placed his own nominee on its throne. He had the coronation of this nominee, and probably also his own imperial coronation, celebrated at Kanauj in the presence of a large number of vassal chiefs. It was thus perhaps regarded as a ceremonial capital of the empire. Although he did not definitely annex the kingdom of Kanauj to the central kingdom comprising Bengal and Bihar, which was ruled by him in person, he left it in charge of his protégé Chakrāyudha, who owed his position entirely to the emperor, and whose status was thus very inferior to that of the other vassal chiefs.

* We can thus easily visualise the structure of the Pāla empire under Dharmapāla. Bengal and Bihar, the nucleus of the empire were under the direct rule of Dharmapāla, a long stretch of territory between the borders of Bihar and the Punjab formed the dependency of Kanauj, while a large number of principalities in

the Punjab, Eastern Rājputāna, Malwa, Berar, and probably also Nepal (if we believe the story in *Svayambhu Purāṇa*) formed the vassal States, enjoying internal autonomy but paying homage and obedience.

It seems very likely that Dharmapāla completed this imperial fabric during the period that intervened between the retirement of Dhruva and the re-appearance of his son Govinda III in the north. As these two events may be dated approximately at 780 and 800 A.D.⁴⁷ we may roughly describe the career of Dharmapāla somewhat as follows ;

- c. 770 A.D.—Accession to the throne of Bengal.
- c. 770-790 A.D.—Conquest of Magadha and a large part of U.P., even extending beyond Allahabad. Encounter with Vatsarāja and Dhruva in the Ganges-Jumna Doab.
- c. 793-800 A.D.—Victorious campaign up to the Indus on the West, Himālayas in the North and even beyond Narbadā in the South.

Dharmapāla could follow unchecked a career of aggressive militarism in the west mainly because of the collapse of the power of his great adversary, the Pratīhāra king Vatsarāja. According to the Rāshtrakūṭa records, the latter was forced by Dhruva to leave his kingdom and betake himself to the trackless desert.⁴⁸ In other words, Vatsarāja took shelter in the heart of Rājputāna which was a stronghold of the Gurjara power and was known after them as Gurjaratrābhūmi.⁴⁹ The Pratīhāras, however, had not given up their political ambitions. Vatsarāja's son and successor, Nāgabhaṭa II made strenuous efforts to recover the lost grounds. He made alliance with the kings of Sindhu, Andhra, Vidarbha and Kalinga. He thus seems to have organised a confederacy of States situated on the border of the Pāla and Rāshtrakūṭa empires, and presumably put himself as their champion against both.⁵⁰

Having consolidated his position by his successful diplomatic policy, Nāgabhaṭa decided to try his strength against his mighty adversary Dharmapāla.⁵¹ He marched against Kanauj where Dharmapāla had placed his protégé Chakrāyudha on the throne. Chakrāyudha was defeated⁵² and fled to Dharmapāla. A battle between Dharmapāla and Nāgabhaṭa, with the empire of Northern India at stake, was now inevitable. That Nāgabhaṭa made extensive preparations for this enterprise and was loyally helped by his

feudal or allied chiefs, is known from several epigraphic records. The Jodhpur inscription of the Pratihāra chief Bāuka⁵³ informs us that his father Kakka gained renown by fighting with the Gauḷas at Mudgagiri *i. e.* Monghyr. Vāhukadhavala, probably a feudatory chief of the Pratihāras, is said to have defeated a king called Dharma (*i. e.*, Dharmapāla),⁵⁴ while another feudatory, Śaṅkaragaṇa, claims to have conquered the Gauḷa country and presented it to his overlord.⁵⁵ As there are reasons to believe that all these chiefs were contemporaries of Nāgabhaṭa II it may be safely presumed that they all took part in the campaign of Nāgabhaṭa against Dharmapāla.

It would appear, from the statement about Kakka, that a pitched battle was fought at Monghyr. It would mean, therefore, that Nāgabhaṭa had marched into the very heart of Dharmapāla's dominions. It is difficult to explain this weakness or lack of preparation on the part of Dharmapāla, and it is not unlikely that he was attacked by the king of Tibet about the same time (see *infra* Ch. V. Section II).

If we are to trust the Pratihāra records, Nāgabhaṭa II must have inflicted a crushing defeat upon Dharmapāla. But the Pratihāra king was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victory. Once more the dream of founding a Pratihāra empire was shattered by the Rāshtrakūṭas. The triumphant career of Nāgabhaṭa II, like that of his father Vatsarāja, was cut short by the invasion of the hereditary enemy from the south.

It is not improbable that in his dire necessity Dharmapāla invoked the aid of the Rāshtrakūṭa king against the common enemy. It is equally likely that the growing power of Nāgabhaṭa alarmed Govinda III and he advanced to the north of his own accord. For we know from the Pratihāra records, that Nāgabhaṭa made alliance with the States on the border of the Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom, and captured the strongholds of Mālava. As Mālava commanded the route between the Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom and Northern India, and was probably then subordinate to the former, the Rāshtrakūṭa king might have accepted the challenge so defiantly thrown, and advanced to the north to settle his own account with the Pratihāra ruler. But whatever may be the cause, the effect of the war was decisive. Nāgabhaṭa's power was thoroughly crushed, and Govinda III made a triumphal march right across his dominions at least up to the Ganges-Jumna Doab.⁵⁶

The victorious campaign of Govinda III against Nāgabhaṭa II saved Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha from the grave menace of the Pratihāras for some time. But a record of Govinda III, the Rāshtrakūṭa king, dated A.D. 805,⁵⁷ claims that he had defeated Dharmapāla of Vaṅgāla and carried away the image of the Goddess Tārā or the royal banner bearing her image.⁵⁸ (This Rāshtrakūṭa victory is, however, referred to in later records in somewhat different words, implying that Dharma and Chakrāyudha voluntarily surrendered to Govinda III.⁵⁹)

Indeed, circumstances would even justify the assumption that it was a pre-arranged affair, and that this was the price by which they purchased the timely intervention of the Rāshtrakūṭa monarch. In reality, this submission meant nothing. For, as they anticipated, Govinda III soon returned to the Deccan, and Dharmapāla was left free to re-organise his empire.)

There is no reliable evidence in support of the view, generally accepted, that Nāgabhaṭa, after having defeated Chakrāyudha, annexed his kingdom and transferred his seat of government to Kanauj, which henceforth continued to be the capital of the dynasty.⁶⁰ As a matter of fact, the only known record of Nāgabhaṭa, dated 815 A.D., was found in Buchkala, in the Jodhpur State, and the locality is said to be within his kingdom proper (*sva-vishaya*).⁶¹

(Taking everything into consideration, the most probable view seems to be that Dharmapāla's empire did not suffer any considerable diminution during the rest of his life, and the power of the Pratihāras was mainly confined to Rājputāna.) It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that Dharmapāla spent his last days in peace, (and we may well accept the statement, made in the Monghyr copper-plate (v. 2) of Devapāla, that there was no disturbance in the dominions when he succeeded his father Dharmapāla.)

(Dharmapāla fully deserved the rest after a long reign of stress and storm. His career was indeed a remarkable one. He inherited a small kingdom from his father, but his prowess and diplomacy, aided by good fortune, enabled him to establish a vast empire in Northern India. He had to fight many battles, and sometimes suffered serious reverses. On more than one occasion his position appeared precarious. But his undaunted spirit triumphed over all obstacles, and he launched Bengal into a career of imperial glory and military renown to which there has been no parallel before or since.) The lure of the imperial city of Kanauj which proved the

ruin of Śaśāṅka's kingdom paved the way for his grand success, and Bengal's dream of founding an empire in Northern India was at last fulfilled. We can only dimly realise its profound effect on Bengal. The country which only two generations ago was trampled under feet by a succession of foreign invaders, and suffered almost complete political disintegration, suddenly came to be the mistress of the whole of Northern India up to its furthest limits. It was nothing short of miracle, and no wonder that the whole country was resounding with the tales of wonderful achievements of its remarkable ruler. The court-poet did not perhaps very much exaggerate the state of things when he wrote the following verse about Dharmapāla :

"Hearing his praises sung by the cowherds on the borders, by the foresters in the forests, by the villagers on the outskirts of villages, by the playing groups of children in every courtyard, in every market by the guardians of the weights and in pleasure-houses by the parrots in the cages, he always bashfully turns aside and bows down his face."⁶²

Dharmapāla assumed full imperial titles *Parameśvara Paramabhātāraka Mahārājādhirāja*, whereas his father is called only *Mahārājādhirāja*. That Dharmapāla introduced pomp and grandeur worthy of the empire he had built up, would be evident from the following description of what looks like an Imperial *Durbar* held in Pāṭaliputra :

"Now—from his royal camp of victory, pitched at Pāṭaliputra, where the manifold fleets of boats proceeding on the path of the Bhāgīrathī make it seem as if a series of mountain-tops had been sunk to build another causeway (for Rāma's passage) ; where, the brightness of daylight being darkened by densely packed arrays of rutting elephants, the rainy season (with its masses of black clouds) might be taken constantly to prevail ; where the firmament is rendered grey by the dust, dug up by the hard hoofs of unlimited troops of horses presented by many kings of the north ; and where the earth is bending beneath the weight of the innumerable foot-soldiers of all the kings of Jambudvīpa, assembled to render homage to their supreme lord."⁶³

In spite of the obvious exaggeration of the poet, the above passage is a fair index of the imperial vision of Bengal towards the close of the reign of Dharmapāla.

It is extremely unfortunate that we know so little about the personal history of Dharmapāla, except his political and military achievements. The Khalimpur copper-plate shows that he must have

reigned for at least thirty-two years. Tāranātha's statement that he ruled for sixty-four years cannot be credited in the absence of any corroborative evidence. The Monghyr copper-plate informs us that he married Raṇṇādevī, the daughter of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Parabala. The Rāshtrakūṭa king is usually identified with the king of that name who was ruling in Central India in 861 A.D., but this seems very doubtful.⁶⁴ It is very likely that Dharmapāla's father-in-law belonged to the well-known Rāshtrakūṭa family of the Deccan,⁶⁵ but no king of that family with Parabala as name or *biruda* is known to us so far.

The Khalimpur copper-plate refers to Yuvarāja Tribhuvanapāla as *dūtaka* of the Grant. Whether he is identical with Devapāla, who succeeded Dharmapāla, or a different person, is not known to us. In the latter case, he was probably the eldest son of Dharmapāla who either predeceased his father, or was superseded by Devapāla under circumstances not known to us.

Dharmapāla had a younger brother named Vākpāla. It is claimed in a later record that he was a valiant hero and destroyed the enemies of his brother. It may be presumed that Vākpāla was the commander of the royal army. Similarly, we learn from another later record that a Brāhmaṇa named Garga was the minister of Dharmapāla. In this record of his descendant, Garga is given the credit of making Dharmapāla, the lord of the east, ultimately the lord of the other directions too. These credits, claimed on behalf of the general and minister of Dharmapāla, may, no doubt have some foundation, but we must accept them with caution, specially as they come from interested parties.

✓According to Tibetan tradition, Dharmapāla was a great patron of Buddhism. He is said to have founded the famous Vikramaśīla *vihāra* in Magadha on the top of a hill on the bank of the Ganges. It had 114 teachers in different subjects and included a central temple, surrounded by 107 others, all enclosed by a boundary wall.⁶⁶ According to Buston,⁶⁷ Dharmapāla also built a magnificent monastery at Odantapurī, but according to Tāranātha,⁶⁸ it was founded by either Gopāla or Devapāla. Curiously enough, the legend related by Buston about the foundation of Odantapurī *vihāra* by Dharmapāla is exactly the same as is told by Tāranātha about the foundation of a *vihāra* at Somapurī in Varendra by Devapāla. Now the recent archaeological excavations⁶⁹ carried out at Paharpur, in Rajshahi district, leave no doubt that its ruins

represent the famous Somapura-*vihāra*, and the name of the place is still preserved in the neighbouring village called Ompur. According to the short inscriptions on some clay seals found in Paharpur, the Somapura-*vihāra* was founded by Dharmapāla. Tāranātha says that Dharmapāla founded fifty religious schools.⁷⁰ As already stated above, Dharmapāla was the patron of the great Buddhist writer Haribhadra.⁷¹ It reflects great credit upon the emperor, that amid his pre-occupations with war and politics he could devote his thought and activities to these pious and peaceful pursuits.

Although Dharmapāla was a Buddhist king, he was not hostile to Brāhmanical religion in any way. He granted land for the worship of a Brāhmanical god (Ins. No. B. 2) and followed the rules of caste laid down in the scriptures (No. B. 8, v. 5). The appointment of a Brāhmaṇa Garga as his minister, whose descendants occupied the post for several generations (No. B. 20), shows that politics was not influenced in any way by religion. ✓

2. *Devapāla* (c. 810—850 A.D.)

¶ *Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja* Devapāla, who succeeded to the throne about 810 A.D., was fully endowed with the prowess and other qualities of his father. The available records seem to indicate that Devapāla not only maintained the empire intact, but even extended its boundaries. The most interesting of these is the Bādāl Pillar inscription (No. B. 20) which contains a eulogy of five generations of hereditary Brāhmaṇ ministers who served under four rulers of the Pāla dynasty beginning from Dharmapāla. Extravagant pretensions are put forward in this record on behalf of Darbhapāṇi and his grandson Kedāramiśra who both served under Devapāla. It was Darbhapāṇi's diplomacy, so we are told, which enabled Devapāla to exact tributes from the whole of Northern India from the Himālaya to the Vindhya mountains, and from the Eastern to the Western seas (v. 5). It was again the intelligence of Kedāramiśra that enabled Devapāla to enjoy the sea-girt earth after having exterminated the Utkalas, curbed the pride of the Hūṇas, and destroyed the haughtiness of the Draviḍa and Gurjara lords (v. 13). ✓

Similar credit is given to the general of Devapāla in the record of a descendant of the former (Ins. No. B. 18). We are told that on

the approach of Devapāla's forces under his brother Jayapāla, the king of Utkala fled from his capital city, and the king of Prāgjyotisha submitted without any fight (v.6). (Devapāla's own Grant (No.B.8) shows that his career of victory led him as far as Kāmboja in the west and Vindhya mountains in the south)

To whomsoever might belong the credit of these remarkable achievements, they undoubtedly testify to the brilliance of Devapāla's reign. (It appears that he peacefully inherited the vast empire of his father and firmly established his authority (Ins. No. B. 8, v. 12). But it was soon apparent that he could not long maintain the extensive empire left by his father merely by peaceful and diplomatic methods,) as his minister Darbhpaṇi claims to have done. (In those unsettled times, nothing but a policy of blood and iron could have checked the disruptive forces within the empire and aggressive designs of ambitious neighbours. So Devapāla's long reign of about forty years must have witnessed a series of military campaigns, including those against the Prāgjyotishas, Utkalas, Hūṇas, Gurjaras, and Draviḍas.)

Prāgjyotisha is a well-known name of the Brahmaputra valley, and the province or a part of it was also called Kāmarūpa.⁷² According to Hiuen Tsang, Kāmarūpa included the whole of Assam valley and extended up to the Karatoyā river in the west. According to the Bhagalpur copper-plate (No. B. 18), when Jayapāla set out on a conquering expedition the king of Prāgjyotisha lived in happiness for a long time by accepting the order (of Jayapāla) to desist from warlike preparations. (It is thus evident that the king of Assam accepted the suzerainty of Devapāla and was left unmolested.) This king was probably either Harjara or his father Piālabha.⁷³

The conquest of Utkala was, however, more thorough. In addition to the passage quoted above about the flight of the Utkala king from his capital, the Bādāl Pillar inscription informs us that the Utkalas were exterminated. There might have been one or more expeditions against Utkala, and the kingdom was thoroughly subjugated. Tāranātha informs us that Orissa, like Bengal, suffered from internal disruption,⁷⁴ shortly before Gopāla was elected king. But like the Pālas in Bengal, the Kara dynasty restored the solidarity of the kingdom. Śubhakara, the third king of this dynasty who bore imperial titles, has been identified by S. Lévi with the king of Wu-cha who sent an autographed manuscript to the Chinese emperor

Te-tsong in 795 A.D. His son Śivakara also bore imperial titles, and ruled in Orissa.⁷⁵ After him nearly two hundred years elapsed before we hear of another Kara king in Orissa who might or might not have been descended from the earlier Karas.⁷⁶ The Pālas probably conquered Utkala during or immediately after the reign of Śivakara, and their boast that they had exterminated the Utkalas was perhaps not altogether unjustified.

The Hūṇas were the nomadic tribe from Central Asia that played a dominant rôle in the history of India during the latter half of the fifth and the first half of the sixth century A.D. After that they had ceased to be a great power, but ruled over one or more small principalities. One of these was situated in the seventh century A.D. in Uttarāpatha, near the Himālayas.⁷⁷ It was probably this principality which was successfully invaded by Devapāla.⁷⁸ Thereafter he proceeded up to Kāmboja, which was to the north-west of the Punjab and immediately to the north of Gandhāra. The Hūṇa principality and Kāmboja were both situated on the outskirts of the Pāla empire and this sufficiently explains Devapāla's hostility with them. These detailed conquests show that Devapāla not only maintained intact the empire he had inherited from his father, but also extended its boundaries by the conquest of Assam and Orissa on one side, and Kāmboja and Hūṇa principalities on the other. (The claim that he ruled from the Himālaya to the Vindhya, and from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, was perhaps not very far from truth,) and was in any case a pardonable exaggeration, and not a 'mere bombast'.⁷⁹

✓ The Gurjaras mentioned in the Bādāl Pillar Inscription were undoubtedly the Pratihāras, the old enemy of the Pālas. We have seen above (*supra* pp. 103, 108) how the crushing defeat inflicted by the Rāshtrakūṭas forced the Pratihāras to confine their activities within Rājputāna and Dharmapāla enjoyed his mighty empire undisturbed by them. (Devapāla also appears to have enjoyed a brief respite from their hostile activities during the first part of his reign.) For, as will be shown later, apart from a doubtful reference in a Jaina text, there is nothing to prove that Nāgabhaṭa II recovered his power and occupied Kanauj, and if he did so, it was probably not long before the date of his death (833 A.D.) as given in the same text. The records of the Pratihāras show that this did not revive the old glory of the family. (The reign of Nāgabhaṭa's son Rāmabhadra was an inglorious one,) and there are indirect

evidences to show that he suffered severe reverses in the hands of his enemies, who even for a time ravaged his own dominions.⁸⁰ (Rāmabhadra's son and successor Bhoja, however, infused a new energy and strength among the Pratihāras, and seems to have recovered some of the territories lost by his father. The Barah and Daulatpura copper-plates show that he had occupied Kanauj and recovered Kālāñjara-*maṇḍala* by 835 A.D., and Gurjaratrā, his ancestral territories in Rājputāna, by 843 A.D.⁸¹ (But, evidently his success was shortlived.) For we find Gurjaratrā in possession of another branch of the Pratihāra family in 861 A.D. and Bhoja was defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭas some time before 867 A.D.⁸²)

(It seems to be almost certain that the lord of Gurjaras, whose pride was curbed by Devapāla, was no other than Bhoja I.) According to the Bādāl Pillar Inscription, this must have occurred fairly late in the reign of Devapāla, for the credit of this achievement is taken by Kedāramiśra, the grandson of his first minister Darbhapāṇi. We may, therefore, fix the date of this event between 840 and 850 A.D.⁸³ (It was probably shortly after this that Bhoja was defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭas.) These successive defeats so weakened his power, that even Gurjaratrā, the territory round Jodhpur in Rājputāna, passed out of his hands. (Thus in spite of a short period of trouble, Devapāla had not much to fear from the Pratihāras, and during his long reign that eternal enemy of the Pālas was kept in check.⁸⁴)

(Lastly, we come to the Dravidas who were also defeated by Devapāla. They are usually identified with the Rāshtrakūṭas, and as the Rāshtrakūṭas were, like the Gurjaras, the rivals of the Pālas, the reference may be to a successful fight with them.⁸⁵ It would then appear that Devapāla had to fight with both the hereditary enemies for maintaining his empire, and he was evidently more successful than his father. His Rāshtrakūṭa rival was undoubtedly Amoghavarsha.⁸⁶)

(The term Draviḍa is, however, usually applied to denote, not the Deccan plateau which formed the Rāshtrakūṭa dominions proper, but the South Indian peninsula. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the Draviḍa ruler defeated by Devapāla belonged to this region, and in that case he was most probably his contemporary Pāṇḍya king Śrī-Māra Śrī-Vallabha who ruled about 815-862 A.D.) According to the Sinnamanur Plates, this Pāṇḍya king repulsed a hostile confederation consisting of the Gaṅgas, Pallavas, Choḷas, Kalingas

Magadhas, and others at a place identified with modern Kumbakonam. The Magadhas in the above list can only refer to the forces of the Pāla king who was in occupation of Magadha during this period. The conquest of Utkala had brought Devapāla into contact with the Kaliṅgas and there was every inducement on his part to enter into a close political association with them, and, through them, with the other powers mentioned above. For these powers were hostile to the Rāshtrakūṭas, and were repeatedly defeated by them during the reigns of Dhruva and Govinda III. The common enmity to the Rāshtrakūṭas would have cemented the alliance, and the southern powers, whose dominions were ruthlessly devastated by the Rāshtrakūṭas, would naturally try to gain the support of such a powerful ruler as Devapāla.

It appears from the Velvikkuḍi Grant that a Pāṇḍya king was at one time a member of a similar confederacy of Eastern kings which defeated the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa I at Venbai.^{86a} But evidently he had seceded from it and was an object of its attack. The Sinnamanur Plates refer to his success against the confederacy at Kumbakonam, but it is just possible that there were other episodes in connection with this campaign which were less favourable to him.⁸⁷

It is thus quite likely that the Draviḍa king, whose pride was curbed by Devapāla, was the Pāṇḍya ruler Śrī-Māra Śrī-Vallabha. (The view is strengthened by verse 15 of the Monghyr copper-plate (No. B. 8) which describes the empire of Devapāla as bounded by the Himālayas in the north and Rāmeśvar Setubandha in the south.) It is no doubt an exaggeration, but there would be at least some basis for this, if we accept the above view. Some military victory near Rāmeśvar in the Pāṇḍya kingdom could be easily magnified by the court-poet, and would offer some explanation of the statement about the extent of his empire ; but it would be very curious indeed that such a statement should be made without absolutely any basis of fact. Similarly, (the claim of the Chandella king Vijaya that he reached, in course of his conquest, the extreme south where Rāma built his bridge, would be equally absurd unless we suppose that he did this in company with some powerful king ; and from what has been said above,⁸⁸ this king may be Devapāla.) It is difficult to believe that two court-poets writing in different countries at different time should concoct the same baseless story about two different kings. The available evidences do not enable us to make

any positive statement, but the hypothesis about a victorious expedition of Devapāla in the southernmost part of India cannot now be ruled out as altogether fantastic.

(Devapāla ruled for at least 35 years⁸⁹ and his reign may be placed between 810 and 850 A.D. Under him the Pāla empire reached the height of its glory. His suzerainty was acknowledged over the whole of Northern India from Assam to the borders of Kashmir, and his victorious forces marched from the Indus to the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra, and from the Himālayas to the Vindhyas, perhaps even to the southernmost extremity of India. His name and fame were known far outside India, and king Bālaputradeva of the Śailendra dynasty ruling in Java, Sumatra, and Malay Peninsula sent an ambassador to him.⁹⁰) The object of this embassy was to ask for a grant of five villages with which the Śailendra king proposed to endow a monastery he had built at Nālandā. / The monastery of Nālandā was in those days the seat of international Buddhist culture, and the Pāla emperors, as its guardians, held a high position in the Buddhist world. Devapāla was a great patron of Buddhism and he granted the request of the Śailendra king. His interest in the Nālandā monastery and deep devotion to the Buddhist faith are also known from the Ghoshrawa inscription (B. 10). / It records that Viradeva, a Brāhmaṇa of Nagarahāra (Jelalabad) and a learned Buddhist priest, received ovation from Devapāla and was appointed the head of the Nālandā monastery.

(A general review of the Pāla kingdom towards the close of Devapāla's reign is given by the Arab traveller and merchant Sulaimān) who made several voyages to India and wrote an account of it in 851 A.D. The Pāla kingdom is referred to as Ruhmi (Rahma, according to Al'Masūdi). (The Pāla king is said to be at war with his neighbours, the Rāshtrakūṭas and the Gurjara-Pratīhāras. His troops were more numerous than those of his adversaries) In his military campaigns he took 50,000 elephants, and ten to fifteen thousand men in his army were employed in fulling and washing cloths.⁹¹

Reference has already been made above to the nature of Dharmapāla's empire. So far as we can judge from the available records, Devapāla, too, does not seem to have exercised any direct administrative control over any territory outside Bengal and Bihar. In the case of the Imperial Guptas and Gurjara-Pratihāras, not

only inscriptions all over Northern India invoke their name as suzerain, but we have also the records of their officers governing remote territories like Kathiawar peninsula. No such records of the two Pāla emperors have yet been discovered beyond the confines of the modern States of Bengal and Bihar. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that so far as the rest of the imperial territories were concerned, they were governed by local rulers who acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pālas. This is corroborated by v. 8 of the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (B. 8).⁹²

In this connection, it is interesting to note that reference is made to a Pāla ruler, Yuvarāja by name, in the *Udayasundarī-kathā* composed by Soḍḍhala.⁹³ We learn from this book that a famous poet, Abhinanda by name, graced his court.⁹⁴ The *Rāmacharita*,⁹⁵ composed by this poet Abhinanda, gives more details about Yuvarāja who is described as a great conqueror. He had the epithet Hāravarsha, and was the son of Vikramaśīla. He is also referred to as the ornament of the Pāla family (*Pāla-kula-chandra*, *Pāla-kula-pradīpa* etc.) founded by Dharmapāla (*Dharmapāla-kula-kairava-kānan-endu*).⁹⁶

These epithets leave no doubt that Yuvarāja Hāravarsha belonged to the Pāla family of Bengal. According to the *Rāmacharita*, he was a powerful king, a statement which is also corroborated by the *Udayasundarī-kathā*. The question, therefore, naturally arises whether he is to be identified with a known Pāla king, or regarded as a ruler over some territory outside Bengal and Bihar. It has been suggested that Vikramaśīla, the father of Yuvarāja, was another name of Dharmapāla who founded the Vikramaśīla monastery, and Hāravarsha is identical with Devapāla.⁹⁷ Dr. D. C. Gangūly infers from the epithet Hāravarsha that he was connected with some Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom. As Parabala, the Rāshtrakūṭa king of Central India, was the father of Dharmapāla's queen, Dr. Gangūly suggests that Yuvarāja might have ruled over that territory.⁹⁸ None of these conjectures, except perhaps the identity of Dharmapāla (or Devapāla) and Vikramaśīla can be supported by positive evidence. There are some grounds for the belief that the poet Abhinanda was an inhabitant of Bengal,⁹⁹ and in that case Yuvarāja Hāravarsha may be the well-known Pāla king Devapāla or his son. But if Yuvarāja Hāravarsha ruled over any territory outside Bengal and Bihar, this will be the only instance where any part of the Pāla empire was directly administered by the Pāla kings

or members of their family. In any case, the history of Yuvarāja Hāravarsha is an interesting episode in the history of the Pālas. All that we can infer about the period of his rule from literary evidence, is that he flourished certainly before the eleventh century A.D. and probably before the tenth.¹⁰⁰

In conclusion, a brief reference may be made to the relation between Bengal and Tibet during the reigns of the first three Pāla kings. The political relation between Tibet and India down to the middle of the eighth century A.D. has been discussed above (see *supra* pp, 83-85). In spite of the victories of Lalitāditya, the Tibetan chronicles, of a later date, record their great achievements in India during the period 755-836 A.D.

The Tibetan king Khri-srong-lde-btsan (755-97 A.D.), regarded as an incarnation of Bodhisatva Mañjusrī, was a very powerful king. According to the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, "he subdued all the provinces on the four frontiers" including "China in the east and India in the south."¹⁰¹ In a Tibetan text, composed not much later than the ninth century A.D., his son Mu-tig Btsan-po (804-815) is said to have brought under his sway two or three (parts of) Jambudvīpa.¹⁰² This somewhat vague statement is supplemented by the following details in the same text :

"In the south the Indian kings there established, the Rāja Dharma-dpal and Drahu-dpun, both waiting in their lands under order to shut up their armies, yielded the Indian kingdom in subjection to Tibet : the wealth of the Indian country, gems and all kinds of excellent provisions, they punctually paid. The two great kings of India, upper and lower, out of kindness to themselves (or in obedience to him), pay honour to commands."¹⁰³

The king Dharma-dpal in the above passage undoubtedly refers to the Pāla king Dharmapāla. According to Tāranātha he reigned for 60 years and was probably a contemporary of both the above kings.¹⁰⁴ As regards Drahu-dpun, Dr. Thomas, who edited the text, suggests that it might mean "nephew, or grandson, Drahu," but it does not help us indentifying him.

The next important king Ral-pa-can (c. 817-c 836 A.D), according to the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, conquered India as far as the Gaṅgāsāgara. This has been taken to represent the mouth of the Ganges.¹⁰⁵

The facts culled above from the Tibetan texts throw interesting light upon the political relation between India and Tibet during

the first century of Pāla rule. How far the Tibetan claims of conquest and supremacy in Indian plains may be regarded as historical facts, it is difficult to say. For the Indian sources contain no reference to any military campaign from Tibet, far less to the exercise of political authority by its king in India proper. While, therefore, we must suspend our final judgment about Tibetan conquest and supremacy in India until fresh evidence is available, we must not ignore the possibility that perhaps the course of events in Bengal during 750-850 A.D. was influenced by Tibet to a much larger extent than we are apt to imagine. ¹⁰⁶

III. The decline and fall of the Empire

(The glory and brilliance of the Pāla empire did not long survive the death of Devapāla.) (The rule of his successors, whose names and approximate dates are given below, was marked by a steady process of decline and disintegration which reduced the Pālas almost to an insignificant political power in North India.)

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Vigrahapāla I | |
| or | c. 850-854 A.D. |
| Śūrapāla I | |
| 2. Nārāyaṇapāla | c. 854-908 A.D. |
| 3. Rājyapāla | c. 908-940 A.D. |
| 4. Gopāla II | c. 940-960 A.D. |
| 5. Vigrahapāla II | c. 960-988 A.D. |

Devapāla was succeeded by Vigrahapāla. There is some dispute among scholars regarding the relationship between the two, but the most probable view seems to be that Vigrahapāla was the nephew of Devapāla, and not his son (cf. App. III). According to the genealogy preserved in the Grants of Nārāyaṇapāla and subsequent kings, Dharmapāla had a younger brother named Vākpāla, who was evidently his general and fought his enemies in all directions. Vākpāla's son Jayapāla was the great general of Devapāla and conquered Orissa and Assam for his royal cousin. Vigrahapāla, who ascended the throne after the death of Devapāla, was probably the son of this Jayapāla, though some take him to be the son of Devapāla.

(For the present, we are absolutely in the dark regarding the circumstances which led to this change in the line of succession.)

It might have been due to the absence of any heir of Devapāla, although this does not appear to be very likely. For the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (B. 8) shows that he had installed his son Rājyapāla as Crown-Prince, and that this son was alive in the year 33 of his reign, *i.e.*, not more than seven or eight years before his death. Of course, Rājyapāla might have died during this interval, as appears to have been the case with Tribhuvanapāla mentioned above. On the other hand, we cannot altogether eliminate the possibility of an internal dispute regarding succession¹⁰⁷ in which the general Jayapāla might have placed his own son on the throne with the support of his army. (For the sudden collapse of the Pāla Empire naturally leads to the presumption of a catastrophe of this kind, and the view of an internal disruption is supported by the mention of the kingdoms of Aṅga, Vaṅga and Magadha in a Rāshtrakūṭa record dated 866 A.D.)

Vigrahapāla, who inherited the throne and the vast empire of Devapāla, is described in very vague and general terms as having destroyed his enemies. The old Kedāramiśra continued as minister. But the Bādāl Pillar Inscription (B. 20) which attributes to his diplomacy the great military victories of Devapāla, has nothing to say of the next king whom it calls Śūrapāla. Śūrapāla was obviously another name of Vigrahapāla,¹⁰⁸ and all that the Bādāl Pillar inscription tells us about him is that he attended the sacrificial ceremonies performed by his minister, and poured holy water over his own head for the welfare of his empire. It offers a strong contrast between the warlike Devapāla and his successor who was evidently of a pacific and religious disposition. Vigrahapāla maintained this attitude till the last. He abdicated the throne in favour of his son Nārāyaṇapāla and retired to a religious life.¹⁰⁹ He had married a princess of the Haihaya family named Lajjā.¹¹⁰

Nārāyaṇapāla also resembled his father rather than his grand-uncle. He had Kedāramiśra's son Guravamiśra as his minister, but the Bādāl Pillar inscription records no glorious military achievement to his credit. The Bhagalpur copper-plate grant (B. 18) issued in the 17th regnal year of Nārāyaṇapāla, also refers to his prowess in only vague and general terms, but does not mention any specific conquest. Although he ruled for no less than fifty-four years (B. 19) we have not the least evidence of any military victory of Nārāyaṇapāla. All these raise a strong presumption about the weakness of these two Pāla rulers, and this presumption is fully borne out by

external evidences, particularly the history of the Rāshtrakūṭas and the Pratīhāras, the two hereditary enemies of the Pālas.

As regards the Rāshtrakūṭas,¹¹¹ we learn from the Sirur Inscription, dated 866 A.D., that the ruler or rulers of Aṅga, Vaṅga, and Magadha paid homage to king Amoghavarsha (c. 814-c. 880 A.D.). The internal history of the Rāshtrakūṭas makes it highly improbable that Amoghavarsha could have undertaken an expedition against the Pāla ruler before he had defeated the king of Veṅgi some time about 860 A.D. It is likely that after the conquest of Veṅgi, the Rāshtrakūṭa forces proceeded along the eastern coast and invaded the Pāla kingdom from the south. (It was perhaps of the type of the occasional military raids of the Rāshtrakūṭas into Northern India, and had no permanent effect.) But it must have considerably weakened the military power and the political prestige of the Pālas. The conquest of a portion of Rāḍhā by the Śūlka king *Mahārājādhirāja* Raṇastambha (of Orissa) may also be assigned to the same period,¹¹² and may not be altogether unconnected with the Rāshtrakūṭa invasion.

These reverses of the Pālas in the south probably created a favourable opportunity for the Pratīhāra king Bhojadeva to renew his ambitious efforts which were checked by Devapāla. The defeat inflicted by the Rāshtrakūṭas and the pacific disposition of Vīgrahapāla and his successor Nārāyaṇapāla must have encouraged Bhoja to wrest the empire of Northern India from the Pālas.¹¹³ His enterprise proved successful. He first turned his attention towards the west and destroyed the remnant of the political suzerainty enjoyed by the Pālas. He then proceeded to the east and subjugated extensive territories both in Bundelkhand and the United Provinces. It does not appear that he had encountered any opposition from the Pālas until he reached almost the borders of Magadha. But in spite of the weakness of the Pālas, Bhoja made extensive preparations against them.

We learn from the Kahla Plate¹¹⁴ that Guṇāmbhodhideva, a Kalachuri king of Gorakhpur, who obtained some territories from Bhojadeva, snatched away the sovereignty of the Gauḍas. This Bhojadeva is undoubtedly the great Pratīhāra king, who was successful in his expedition against the Pāla king and probably rewarded the services of his feudatory Kalachuri chief by grant of lands. It is also probable that Bhoja obtained the assistance of the famous Kalachuri king Kokkalla I of Dāhala. Kokkalla's date is not

definitely known, but he probably ruled between A.D. 842 and 888.¹¹⁵ He is said to have granted freedom from fear to Bhoja and plundered the treasuries of various kingdoms including Vaṅga.¹¹⁶ The two events may not be unconnected, and in any case Kokkalla's raid against Vaṅga, if it was really a fact, must have facilitated the success of Bhoja. Another chief that probably accompanied Bhoja was the Guhilot king Guhila II who is said to have defeated the Gauḍa king.¹¹⁷ His father Harsharāja joined the campaigns of Bhoja in the early part of his reign. It is, therefore, exceedingly likely that he accompanied Bhoja in his successful Gauḍa expedition and took the credit thereof : for it is difficult to believe that he could have led an expedition against distant Gauḍa on his own account.

Bhoja had thus organised a formidable confederacy against the Pālas, and it seems he inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. Being secured against any trouble from the Rāshtrakūṭas in the south,¹¹⁸ and having laid low the power of the Pālas, Bhoja could enjoy in peace the extensive empire he had established in Northern India. In the west he had conquered Karnāl in the Punjab and the Kathiawar peninsula, and probably extended his empire up to the borders of the Muslim principalities in the Indus Valley. In the east the Kalachuris of Gorakhpur as well as the Chandellas of Jejākabhukti (Bundelkhand) acknowledged his suzerainty, and the Pālas were humbled to the dust. (Armed with the resources of this vast empire, Bhoja's son and successor Mahendrapāla followed up the victory over the Pālas with relentless severity.) Six of the inscriptions,¹¹⁹ found in Patna and Gaya districts, leave no doubt that Magadha was annexed to the Pratihāra empire. An inscription of Mahendrapāla¹²⁰ dated in his fifth year, has been found on a pillar unearthed during the excavations at Pāhārpur in Rajshahi district, the site of the famous Somapura-vihāra of Dharmapāla. Another inscription of Mahendrapāla has been found at Mahisantosh (Dinajpur District, E. Pakistan).^{120a} It is dated in his 15th regnal year. These two records prove that even Northern Bengal had passed on for a time into the hands of the Pratihāras.

(It is difficult to give a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenal success of the Pratihāras and the complete collapse of the Pālas during the latter half of the ninth century A.D.) The personality of Bhoja and his success in organising a powerful confederacy are no doubt important factors, but able rulers like Devapāla might have successfully contended against both. (The failure of the

Pāla kings undoubtedly demonstrates their personal incapacity and want of foresight and diplomacy. But there might have been other factors at work. We have already hinted at the probability of a disputed succession after the death of Devapāla. Further, the records of Assam and Orissa show that both these neighbouring kingdoms, which had been subjugated by Devapāla, had again become powerful.) In Assam, king Harjara, one of whose known dates is 829-30 A.D.,¹²¹ had assumed imperial titles,¹²² and the record of his son Vanamāla describes him as a powerful emperor and conqueror in many battles.¹²³ In Orissa, the Śailodbhava dynasty re-established its supremacy on the ruins of the Karas, and Sainyabhīta III Mādhavavarman Śrīnivāsa (c. 850 A.D.) established the greatness of his family. He and his successor are said to have performed Aśvamedha, Vājapeya and other sacrifices, in token of their political supremacy.¹²⁴

(The rise to power of these two dependent principalities might have been either the cause or the effect of the weakness of the Pāla kings.) In the absence of positive evidences we cannot hazard any conjecture in favour of the one or the other, but we must keep in view the possibility of the reaction of the greatness of these powers upon the fortunes of the Pālas.

It has been mentioned above that Vigrahapāla I married a Haihaya princess. This might have been a move on the part of the Pālas to win over the friendship of the Kalachuris. We know that the Rāshtrakūṭas formed numerous matrimonial alliances¹²⁵ with the family of the powerful Kalachuri king Kokkalla who had at least eighteen sons (and possibly also numerous daughters). It is not unlikely that Vigrahapāla's queen was a daughter of Kokkalla himself. But, as we know from the case of the Rāshtrakūṭas, such alliances did not always prevent political rivalries leading to active hostilities. In the case of the Pālas, we cannot say whether the Haihaya alliance was really of any help to them. But it is certain that they were able to recover the possession of Northern Bengal and Magadha before the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla was over.

Three inscriptions of Nārāyaṇapāla (B. 16, 17, 18) dated in the years 7, 9 and 17, and found in Bihar, seem to prove that the kingdom of Magadha was in his possession at least up to his 17th year *i.e.*, c. 870 A.D. The dates of the eight inscriptions of Mahendrapāla found in Bengal and Bihar range between years 2 and 15 *i.e.*, c. 887 to 900 A.D. (The Pratihāra power must have been consi-

derably weakened shortly after the last-named year.) For sometime between 915 and 917 A.D., if not earlier, the Pratihāra king Mahipāla, son of Mahendrapāla, was disastrously defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭas. His capital was sacked and he fled towards the east, hotly pursued by his enemies. This catastrophe indicates the weakness of the Pratihāras, which was perhaps due to internal troubles¹²⁶ following the death of Mahendrapāla and gave an opportunity to the Pālas to retrieve their position. In any case, as we find an inscription of Nārāyaṇapāla (B. 19) in Bihar dated in the year 54 of his reign, we may presume that the Pāla king recovered Northern Bengal and Bihar about 908 A.D., if not earlier.

Nārāyaṇapāla had also probably come into conflict with the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa II who succeeded Amoghavarsha about 878 A.D., and ruled till 914 A.D. It is said in the Rāshtrakūṭa records¹²⁷ that Kṛishṇa II was the 'preceptor charging the Gauḷas with the vow of humility,' and that 'his command was obeyed by Aṅga, Kalinga, Vaṅga and Magadha.' A petty chief of Velanāṇḍu (in Kistna district) named Malla I, who claims to have subdued the Vaṅgas,¹²⁸ Magadhas, and the Gauḷas, probably accompanied Kṛishṇa II in his expedition. The nature and result of this expedition are difficult to determine, but perhaps Kṛishṇa II had some success against the Pāla king. It is very likely that the Rāshtrakūṭa Tuṅga, whose daughter Bhāgyadevī was married to Nārāyaṇapāla's son Rājyapāla, is no other than Jagattuṅga,¹²⁹ the son of Kṛishṇa II. In that case we may presume that the marriage alliance had brought about, at least temporarily, a cessation of hostilities.

Nārāyaṇapāla died about 908 A.D., and was succeeded by his son Rājyapāla who ruled for at least thirty-two years (B. 26). As noted above, Rājyapāla married Bhāgyadevī, the daughter of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Tuṅga. He is credited in official records with works of public utility such as excavation of big tanks and construction of lofty temples (B. 40). He was succeeded by his son Gopāla II, who ruled for at least six years.¹³⁰ Several records of both these kings have been found in Magadha,¹³¹ and a copper-plate grant, dated in the sixth year of Gopāla II (B. 30), proves his possession of Northern Bengal. Another inscription (B. 29) of Gopāla II proves his possession of the Tippera District from the very beginning of his reign.

(The reigns of these two kings and the next one Vīgrahapāla II witnessed great changes in the political condition of India. The Pratihāras, the most dangerous enemy of the Pālas,) who had

extended their sway even over a part of Bengal, had suffered serious reverses in the hands of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Indra III, who had seized their capital Kanauj and sacked the city while the Pratihāra king Mahipāla fled towards the east, hotly pursued by the Rāshtrakūṭa forces. This catastrophe happened some time between A.D. 915 and 918 and though Mahipāla recovered his throne after the departure of the Rāshtrakūṭa army from the north and regained a part of the old empire, the power and prestige of the Pratihāras had suffered a severe blow from which they were not likely to recover for some time. (There was a truce between the Pālas and the Rāshtrakūṭas cemented by a marriage alliance.) The worst crisis in the history of the Pālas seemed to have been over.

(But unfortunately for the Pālas, the downfall of the Pratihāras let loose other forces which proved no less disastrous to them. Two great powers, the Chandellas and the Kalachuris, tried to establish their political supremacy in Northern India, and the Pālas had to bear the brunt of their aggressive imperialism.)

Yaśovarman, who laid the foundations of the greatness of the Chandellas, is said to have carried on incessant military campaigns all over Northern India, and dominated the whole region from the Himālayas to Malwa and from Kashmir to Bengal. Even making due allowance for the exaggerations of the court-poets, he must be credited with military successes over a wide range of territories. In particular, his conquest of the famous fortress of Kālāñjara gave him a dominant position in the heart of Northern India. According to the Chandella records, Yaśovarman 'was a sword to (cut down) the Gauḍas as if they were pleasure-creepers,' and his son Dhaṅga, who ascended the throne some time before 954 A.D. and ruled till at least 1002 A.D., kept in prison the queens of Rāḍhā and Aṅga.¹³² These statements may not be literally true, but we may take it for granted that during the reigns of Rājyapāla and his two successors, Gopāla II and Vīgrahapāla II, Bengal fared badly in the hands of Yaśovarman and Dhaṅga. About the same time the Kalachuri rulers also raided various parts of the country. In the Kalachuri records we find reference to incursions against Bengal by two successive Kalachuri kings, Yuvarāja I and his son Lakshmanarāja, who probably ruled in the second and third quarters of the tenth century A.D. Yuvarāja is said to have had amorous dalliances with the women of Gauḍa, Karnāṭa, Lāṭa, Kāśmīra and Kaliṅga.¹³³ This is a poetical way of describing military raids in these countries, but it

is difficult to get any idea of their nature and effect. Lakshmanarāja is said to have been 'skilful in breaking (*i.e.*, *defeating*) Vaṅgāla',¹³⁴ which, as we have seen above, refers to Southern and part of Eastern Bengal.¹³⁵ As Lakshmanarāja is also known to have conquered Oḍra,¹³⁶ it is very probable that he advanced through Orissa to the deltaic coast of Bengal, as Rājendra Choḷa did a few years later.

These foreign raids covering the greater part of the tenth century may be regarded both as causes and effects of the military weakness and political disruption of the Pāla kingdom. The reference in Kalachuri and Chandella inscriptions to the various component parts of the kingdom such as Aṅga, Rāḍhā, Gauḍa, and Vaṅgāla as separate units may not be without significance. It is true that sometimes a kingdom is referred to by the name of a particular province within it, but evidences are not altogether wanting that in the present instance, the different States named above really formed independent or semi-independent principalities.

The Pāla records (B. 40, 50, 66,) definitely state that the paternal kingdom of the Pālas had been possessed by a usurper before the end of the reign of Vighrapāla II. or in any case shortly after it. It is generally held that this usurper belonged to a line of Kāmboja family. For a short record (B. 93) engraved on a pillar at Bangarh (Dinajpur District in North Bengal) refers to the construction of a Śaiva temple by a Gauḍa king of the Kāmboja family. Though the date of this record cannot be definitely ascertained it may be referred to the middle of the tenth century A.D. It was formerly believed that this Kāmboja rule was the result of a successful invasion of North Bengal by the Kāmbojas, a hill-tribe from the north, west or east.¹³⁷ But the recently discovered Irdā copper-plate grant (A 92) puts an altogether different complexion on the whole matter.

This grant was issued from the capital city called Priyaṅgu, and records grants of land in *Daṇḍa-bhukti-maṇḍala* of Vardhamāna-bhukti by the *Parameśvara*, *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, *Mahārājādhirāja*, the illustrious Nayapāladeva in the 13th year of his reign. He had succeeded his elder brother Nārāyaṇapāla, who was the son of Rājyapāla and Bhāgyadevī. Rājyapāla is given all the three imperial titles and is described as the ornament of the Kāmboja family.

Now the queen of the Pāla king Rājyapāla, as we have seen above, was also named Bhāgyadevī, and it is, therefore, tempting to identify the king Rājyapāla of the Irdā Plate with the Pāla king

of that name. But this assumption is not free from difficulties, and there is no general agreement among scholars on this point. If we identify Rājyapāla of the Irdā Plate with the Pāla king Rājyapāla, we must hold that there was a partition of the Pāla kingdom after his death between two branches of the Pāla family. If we do not accept this identification, the most reasonable view would be to hold that Rājyapāla, an ambitious and powerful Kāmboja chief, perhaps a dignitary or high official under the Pālas,¹³⁸ had taken advantage of the weakness of the Pāla kingdom to set up an independent principality which ultimately comprised Western and Northern Bengal. The theory of a Kāmboja invasion is not supported by any positive evidence, and appears to be highly improbable.

But whichever of these views we may accept, the main fact remains that the Pāla kingdom was split up during the second half of the tenth century A.D. The kingdom of Rāḍhā, mentioned in the inscription of Dhaṅga, therefore, probably refers to the kingdom of Nārāyaṇapāla and Nayapāla comprising Western and Northern Bengal with its capital at Priyaṅgu. The other kingdom, Aṅga, would naturally refer to the dominions under Gopāla II and Vīgrahapāla II, which probably comprised Aṅga and Magadha.

The discovery of an inscription at Bhaturiya (B. 27) has further complicated the problem. It records the foundation of a Śaiva temple by one Yaśodāsa, a minister (*Tantrādhikārin*) of king Rājyapāla, also called, or known as, Rāmaparākrama. This king is said to "have obtained the possession of a large number of elephants, horses and infantrymen (i. e., prisoners to be made slaves), as well as land and gold, all belonging to his enemies, as a result of his victories over the latter." "Then follows a long list of the countries conquered by the king. The eighth verse states that the king's command "was obeyed by the Mlechchhas, Aṅgas, Kalingas, Vaṅgas. Oḍras, Pāṇḍyas, Kārṇāṭas, Lāṭas, Suhmas, Gurjaras, Kṛitas and Chīnas". The Mlechchhas probably refer to the Muslim Arabs who were in occupation of Kabul, Zabul and Sindh. The Chīnas might refer to the Tibetans, whose rulers, as mentioned above (pp. 118—9) claimed to have subdued "China in the east and India in the south". The Kṛitas, unless taken as the scribe's error for Kirātas (primitive peoples living in the eastern frontier), cannot be located with certainty. But whatever we may think of these identifications, the remaining names are well known

and would indicate a victorious campaign almost all over India. But this can be hardly accepted as a historical fact in view of what is known of the Pālas and their contemporary ruling dynasties in India, and specially of the fact that there is no reference to any military victory of Rājyapāla, not to speak of such glorious *digvijaya*, in his own records or those of the later Pāla records (B. 40, 50, 66) which describe the achievements of all the previous Pāla rulers.

If we scan the list of the peoples conquered by Rājyapāla it appears to be somewhat singular that they include Aṅgas, Vaṅgas, and Suhmas, i.e., Eastern Bihar and Western, Southern and Eastern Bengal, which formed the home territories of the Pālas. The conclusion therefore seems irresistible that to the writer of the record North Bengal alone was regarded as the ancestral territory of Rājyapāla or the region over which he actually exercised sovereignty before he undertook the victorious all-India campaign.

This circumstance would favour the identification of king Rājyapāla of the Bhaturiya Inscription with that of the Irdā Grant (B.92) who founded the Kāmboja ruling family in Gauḍa and is given the imperial titles. The chief difficulty is caused by the fact that both this king and his queen should bear the same names as those of the son and daughter-in-law of Nārāyaṇapāla. This undoubtedly looks highly improbable, but an analogous instance is furnished by Samudravarman and Dattadevī, king and queen of Kāmarūpa, who were almost contemporaries of the Gupta Emperor Samudragupta and Empress Dattadevi.

But apart from all this the long list of conquered peoples might have been simply ignored as purely conventional but for a singular fact of similar nature concerning the Pāla kings of this period. An identical verse is found in the Pāla records while describing three different kings, viz. Gopāla II, son of Rājyapāla, Vighrahapāla II, son of Gopāla II, and Vighrahapāla III, great-grandson of Vighrahapāla II (B. 30, 40, 50). This verse means that the king's elephant forces wandered in the eastern regions full of water, the Malaya mountains in the south, the desert regions¹³⁹ in the west and the Himālaya mountains in the north. When first discovered in connection with king Vighrahapāla II (verse 11 of B. 40) who is known to have lost his ancestral kingdom, the verse was taken to refer to his aimless wanderings in all directions in an attempt to seek refuge or secure help in various quarters.¹⁴⁰ But now that we know that it refers to no less than three kings¹⁴¹ at least two of whom did not lose their

ancestral kingdom, the above explanation or interpretation must be abandoned. The probability is that reference is to the movements of the Pāla kings, with their forces, in the company of a friendly king in the course of his military campaigns. In view of the matrimonial alliance of the Pāla king Rājyapāla with the Rāshtrakūṭas and the victorious campaigns of contemporary Rāshtrakūṭa kings, we may well believe that the two successors of Rājyapāla, namely Gopāla II and Vigrahapāla II, might have joined them in their various campaigns in different parts of India.

It is not unlikely that the victories of Rājyapāla of the Bhaturiya Inscription are also of the same kind. Reference has already been made above to the claim of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa to have subdued Gauḍa, Vaṅga, Aṅga, Kaliṅga, Gaṅga and Magadha, and of one of his feudatories to some of these victories. It may be that the help rendered by the Pāla rulers to the Rāshtrakūṭa kings in these campaigns has been eulogised in a similar way. Moreover, it is not unlikely that the Rājyapāla of Bhaturiya Ins. was a general or feudatory of Kāmboja origin who accompanied a Rāshtrakūṭa (or Chandella or Kalachuri) ruler and ultimately carved out a principality in Gauḍa as a result of his victory, more or less in the same way as enabled a Karṇāṭa chief of the Sena family to have established a kingdom in Bengal, and another, named Nānya, an independent principality in Mithilā. These are all at present mere hypotheses or suggestions, but they must be kept in view in order to assess properly the values or bearing of future discoveries on the whole problem of reconstructing the history of this period.

The Pālas also lost control over East and South Bengal, and we have definite evidence of the existence of several independent kingdoms in this region. The earliest is a kingdom with its capital at Devaparvata, mentioned above, as the capital of the Rāta kings (p 81), the history of which is known from a single coppersplate Grant (B. 73). The first two verses mention how one Vīradeva obtained kingship (*bhumīśvaratva*) and extirpated his enemies. His son and successor Ānandadeva is referred to as *Parama-Saugata* and *Mahārājādhirāja*. His son and successor, Bhavadeva, is also called *Parama-Saugata* and is endowed with imperial titles *Parameśvara*, *Parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, and *Mahārājādhirāja*. His order is issued to the *Vishayapati*s (District officers) and he seems to have the *viruda Abhīnava-mṛigāṅka*. The date of the record is not given, but, on palaeographic grounds, it must be placed later than seventh